A SELECTION OF ESSAYS

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A SELECTION OF ESSAYS

ON VIRTUOUS INDEPENDENCE

It is necessary to an easy and happy life, to possess our minds in such a manner as to be always well satisfied with our own reflections. The way to this state is to measure our actions by our own opinion, and not by that of the rest of the world. The sense of other men ought to prevail over us in things of less consideration, but not in concerns where truth and honour are engaged. When we look into the bottom of things, what at first appears a paradox is a plain truth; and those professions, which, for want of being duly weighed, seem to proceed from a sort of romantic philosophy, and ignorance of the world, after a little reflection, are so reasonable, that it is direct madness to walk by any other rules. Thus to contradict our desires, and to conquer the impulses of our ambition, if they do not fall in with what we in our inward sentiments approve, is so much our interest, and so absolutely necessary to our real happiness, that to contemn all the wealth and power in the world, where they stand in competition with a man's honour, is rather good sense than greatness of mind.

Did we consider that the mind of a man is the man himself, we should think it the most unnatural sort of self-murder to sacrifice the sentiment of the soul to gratify the appetites of the body. Bless us! is it possible, that when the necessities of life are supplied, a man would flatter to be rich, or circumvent

to be powerful! When we meet a poor wretch, urged with hunger and cold, asking an alms, we are apt to think this a state we could rather starve than submit to: but yet how much more despicable is his condition, who is above necessity, and yet shall resign his reason and his integrity to purchase superfluities! Both these are abject and common beggars; but sure it is less despicable to beg a supply to a man's hunger than his vanity. But custom and general prepossessions have so far prevailed over an unthinking world, that those necessitous creatures, who cannot relish life without applause, attendance, and equipage, are so far from making a contemptible figure, that distressed virtue is less esteemed than successful vice. But if a man's appeal, in cases that regard his honour, were made to his own soul, there would be a basis and standing rule for our conduct, and we should always endeavour rather to be, than appear honourable. Mr. Collier in his *Essay on Fortitude*, has treated this subject with great wit and magnanimity. 'What,' says he, 'can be more honourable than to have courage enough to execute the commands of reason and conscience; to maintain the dignity of our nature, and the station assigned us? to be proof against poverty, pain and death itself? I mean so far as not to do anything that is scandalous or sinful to avoid them. To stand adversity under all shapes with decency and resolution! To do this, is to be great above title and fortune. This argues the soul of a heavenly extraction, and is worthy the offspring of the Deity.'

What a generous ambition has this man pointed to us? When men have settled in themselves a conviction, by such noble precepts, that there is nothing honourable which is not accompanied with innocence; nothing mean but what has guilt in it: I say, when they have attained thus much, though poverty, pain, and death, may still retain their terrors, yet

riches, pleasures, and honours, will easily lose their charms, if they stand between us and our integrity.

What is here said with allusion to fortune and fame, may as justly be applied to wit and beauty; for these latter are as adventitious as the other, and as little concern the essence of the soul. They are all laudable in the man who possesses them, only for the just application of them. A bright imagination, while it is subservient to an honest and noble soul, is a faculty which makes a man justly admired by mankind, and furnishes him with reflections upon his own actions, which add delicates to the feast of a good conscience: but when wit descends to wait upon sensual pleasures, or promote the base purposes of ambition, it is then to be contemned in proportion to its excellence. If a man will not resolve to place the foundation of his happiness in his own mind, life is a bewildered and unhappy state, incapable of rest or tranquillity. For to such a one, the general applause of valour, wit, nay of honesty itself, can give him but a very feeble comfort; since it is capable of being interrupted by any one who wants either understanding or good-nature to see or acknowledge such excellencies. This rule is so necessary, that one may very safely say, it is impossible to know any true relish of our being without it. Look about you in common life among the ordinary race of mankind, and you will find merit in every kind is allowed only to those who are in particular districts or sets of company; but, since men can have little pleasure in these faculties which denominate them persons of distinction, let them give up such an empty pursuit, and think nothing essential to happiness but what is in their own power; the capacity of reflecting with pleasure on their own actions, however they are interpreted.

It is so evident a truth, that it is only in our own bosoms we are to search for any thing to make us happy, that it is,

methinks, a disgrace to our nature to talk of taking our measures from thence only, as a matter of fortitude. When all is well there, the vicissitudes and distinctions of life are the mere scenes of a drama; and he will never act his part well, who has his thoughts more fixed upon the applause of the audience than the design of his part.

The life of a man who acts with a steady integrity, without valuing the interpretation of his actions, has but one uniform regular path to move in, where he cannot meet opposition, or fear ambuscade. On the other side, the least deviation from the rules of honour introduces a train of numberless evils, and involves him in inexplicable mazes. He that has entered into guilt has bid adieu to rest; and every criminal has his share of the misery expressed so emphatically in the tragedian,

> Macbeth shall sleep no more!

It was with detestation of any other grandeur but the calm command of his own passions, that the excellent Mr. Cowley cries out with so much justice:

> If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat
> With any thought so mean as to be great,
> Continue, heaven, still from me to remove
> The humble blessings of that life I love!

Sir Richard Steele

OF ELOQUENCE

Of all kinds of success, that of an orator is the most pleasing. Upon other occasions, the applause we deserve is conferred in our absence, and we are insensible of the pleasure we have given; but in eloquence, the victory and the triumph are inseparable. We read our own glory in the face of every spectator, the audience is moved, the antagonist is defeated, and the whole circle bursts into unsolicited applause.

The rewards which attend excellence in this way are so pleasing, that numbers have written professed treatises to teach us the art; schools have been established with no other intent; rhetoric has taken place among the institutions; and pedants have ranged under proper heads, and distinguished with long learned names, *some* of the strokes of nature, or of passion, which orators have used. I say only *some*, for a folio volume could not contain all the figures which have been used by the truly eloquent; and scarce a good speaker or writer but makes use of some that are peculiar or new.

Eloquence has preceded the rules of rhetoric, as languages have been formed before grammar. Nature renders men eloquent in great interests, or great passions. He that is sensibly touched, sees things with a very different eye from the rest of mankind. All nature to him becomes an object of comparison and metaphor, without attending to it; he throws life into all, and inspires his audience with a part of his own enthusiasm.

It has been remarked, that the lower parts of mankind generally express themselves most figuratively; and that tropes are found in the most ordinary forms of conversation. Thus,

in every language, the heart burns; the courage is roused; the eyes sparkle; the spirits are cast down; passion inflames; pride swells, and pity sinks the soul. Nature, everywhere, speaks in those strong images, which, from their frequency, pass unnoticed.

Nature it is which inspires those rapturous enthusiasms, those irresistible turns; a strong passion, a pressing danger, calls up all the imagination, and gives the orator irresistible force. Thus, a captain of the first caliphs, seeing his soldiers fly, cried out, 'Whither do you run ? the enemy are not there! You have been told that the caliph is dead; but God is still living. He regards the brave, and will reward the courageous. Advance!'

A man, therefore, may be called eloquent, who transfers the passion or sentiment with which he is moved himself, into the breast of another; and this definition appears the more just, as it comprehends the graces of silence, and of action. An intimate persuasion of the truth to be proved, is the sentiment and passion to be transferred; and he who effects this, is truly possessed of the talent of eloquence.

I have called eloquence a talent, and not an art, as so many rhetoricians have done, as art is acquired by exercise and study, and eloquence is the gift of nature. Rules will never make either a work or a discourse eloquent; they only serve to prevent faults, but not to introduce beauties; to prevent those passages which are truly eloquent, and dictated by nature, from being blended with others which might disgust or, at least, abate our passion.

What we clearly conceive, (says Boileau) we can clearly express. I may add, that what is felt with emotion, is expressed also with the same movements; the words arise as readily to paint our emotions, as to express our thoughts with perspicuity.

The cool care an orator takes to express passions which he does not feel, only prevents his rising into that passion he would seem to feel. In a word, to feel your subject thoroughly, and to speak without fear, are the only rules of eloquence, properly so called, which I can offer. Examine a writer of genius on the most beautiful parts of his work, and he will always assure you that such passages are generally those which have given him the least trouble, for they came as if by inspiration. To pretend that cold and didactic precepts will make a man eloquent, is only to prove that he is incapable of eloquence.

But, as in being perspicuous, it is necessary to have a full idea of the subject, so in being eloquent, it is not sufficient, if I may so express it, to feel by halves. The orator should be strongly impressed, which is generally the effects of a fine and exquisite sensibility, and not that transient and superficial emotion, which he excites in the greatest part of his audience. It is even impossible to affect the hearers in any great degree without being affected ourselves. In vain it will be objected, that many writers have had the art to inspire their readers with a passion for virtue, without being virtuous themselves; since it may be answered, that sentiments of virtue filled their minds at the time they were writing. They felt the inspiration strongly, while they praised justice, generosity, or good nature; but, unhappily for them, these passions might have been discontinued, when they laid down the pen. In vain will it be objected again, that we can move without being moved, as we can convince without being convinced. It is much easier to deceive our reason than ourselves; a trifling defeat in reasoning may be overseen, and lead a man astray; for it requires reason and time to detect the falsehood, but our passions are not so easily imposed upon,—our eyes, our ears, and every sense, are watchful to detect the imposture.

No discourse can be eloquent that does not elevate the mind. Pathetic eloquence, it is true, has for its only object to affect; but I appeal to men of sensibility, whether their pathetic feelings are not accompanied with some degree of elevation. We may then call eloquence and sublimity the same thing, since it is impossible to be one, without feeling the other. From hence it follows, that we may be eloquent in any language, since no language refuses to paint those sentiments with which we are thoroughly impressed. What is usually called sublimity of style, seems to be only an error. Eloquence is not in the words, but in the subject; and in great concerns, the more simply anything is expressed, it is generally the more sublime. True eloquence does not consist, as the rhetoricians assure us, in saying great things in a sublime style, but in a simple style; for there is, properly speaking, no such thing as a sublime style, the sublimity lies only in the things; and when they are not so, the language may be turgid, affected, metaphorical, but not affecting.

What can be more simply expressed, than the following extract from a celebrated preacher, and yet what was ever more sublime ? Speaking of the small number of the elect, he breaks out thus among his audience: 'Let me suppose that this was the last hour of us all; that the heavens were opening over our heads; that time was passed, and eternity begun; that Jesus Christ in all His glory, that man of sorrows in all His glory, appeared on the tribunal, and that we were assembled here to receive our final decree of life or death eternal! Let me ask, impressed with terror like you, and not separating my lot from yours, but putting myself in the same situation in which we must all one day appear before God, our judge,—let me ask, if Jesus Christ should now appear to make the terrible separation of the just from the unjust, do you think the greatest

number would be saved ? Do you think the number of the elect would even be equal to that of the sinners ? Do you think, if all our works were examined with justice, would He find ten just persons in this great assembly ? Monsters of ingratitude, would he find one ? ' Such passages as these, are sublime in every language. The expression may be less striking, or more indistinct, but the greatness of the idea still remains. In a word, we may be eloquent in every language and in every style, since elocution is only an assistant, but not a constitutor of eloquence.

Of what use, then, will it be said, are all the precepts given us upon this head, both by the ancients and moderns ? I answer, that they cannot make us eloquent, but they will certainly prevent us from becoming ridiculous. They can seldom procure a single beauty, but they may banish a thousand faults. The true method of an orator is not to attempt always to move, always to affect, to be continually sublime, but at proper intervals to give rest both to his own and the passions of his audience. In these periods of relaxation, or of preparation rather, rules may teach him to avoid anything low, trivial, or disgusting. Thus criticism, properly speaking, is intended not to assist those parts which are sublime, but those which are naturally mean and humble, which are composed with coolness and caution, and where the orator rather endeavours not to offend, than attempts to please.

I have hitherto insisted more strenuously on that eloquence which speaks to the passions, as it is a species of oratory almost unknown in England. At the bar it is quite discontinued, and, I think, with justice. In the senate it is used but sparingly, as the orator speaks to enlightened judges. But in the pulpit, in which the orator should chiefly address the vulgar, it seems strange that it should be entirely laid aside.

The vulgar of England are, without exception, the most barbarous and the most unknowing of any in Europe. A great part of their ignorance may be chiefly ascribed to their teachers, who, with the most pretty gentleman-like serenity, deliver their cool discourses, and address the reason of men who have never reasoned in all their lives. They are told of cause and effect, of beings self-existent, and the universal scale of beings. The spruce preacher reads his lucubration without lifting his nose from the text, and never ventures to earn the shame of an enthusiast.

By this means, though his audience feel not one word of all he says, he earns, however, among his acquaintance, the character of a man of sense; among his acquaintance only, did I say ? nay, even with his bishop.

The polite of every country have several motives to induce them to a rectitude of action; the love of virtue for its own sake, the shame of offending, and the desire of pleasing. The vulgar have but one, the enforcements of religion; and yet those who should push this motive home to their hearts, are basely found to desert their post. They speak to the squire, the philosopher, and the pedant; but the poor, those who really want instruction, are left uninstructed.

I have attended most of our pulpit orators, who, it must be owned, write extremely well upon the text they assume. To give them their due also, they read their sermons with elegance and propriety, but this goes but a very short way in true eloquence. The speaker must be moved. In this, in this alone, our English divines are deficient. Were they to speak to a few calm dispassionate hearers, they certainly use the properest methods of address; but their audience is chiefly composed of the poor, who must be influenced by motives of reward and punishment, and whose only virtues lie in self-interest or fear.

How then are such to be addressed ? not by studied periods, or cold disquisitions; not by the labours of the head, but the honest spontaneous dictates of the heart. Neither writing a sermon with regular periods and all the harmony of elegant expression; neither reading it with emphasis, propriety, and deliberation; neither pleasing with metaphor, simile, or rhetorical fustian; neither arguing cooly, and untying consequences united in *a priori*, nor bundling up inductions *a posteriori;* neither pedantic jargon, nor academical trifling, can persuade the poor. Writing a discourse cooly in the closet, then getting it by memory, and delivering it on Sundays, even that will not do. What then is to be done? I know of no expedient to speak—to speak at once intelligibly and feelingly—except to understand the language; to be convinced of the truth of the object—to be perfectly acquainted with the subject in view—to prepossess yourself with a low opinion of your audience—and to do the rest extempore. By this means strong expressions, new thoughts, rising passions, and the true declamatory style will naturally ensue.

Fine declamation does not consist in flowery periods, delicate allusions, or musical cadences; but in a plain, open, loose style, where the periods are long and obvious; where the same thought is often exhibited in several points of view; all this, strong sense, a good memory, and a small share of experience, will furnish to every orator; and without these a clergyman may be called a fine preacher, a judicious preacher, and a man of sound sense; he may make his hearers admire his understanding, but will seldom enlighten theirs.

When I think of the Methodist preachers among us, how seldom they are endued with common sense, and yet how often and how justly they affect their hearers, I cannot avoid saying within myself, had these been bred gentlemen, and been endued

with even the meanest share of understanding, what might they not effect! Did our bishops, who can add dignity to their expostulations, testify the same fervour, and *entreat* their hearers, as well as *argue*, what might not be the consequence!

Tillotson has been commended as the model of pulpit eloquence; thus far he should be imitated, where he generally strives to convince, rather than to please: but to adopt his long, dry, and sometimes tedious discussions, which serve to amuse only divines, and are utterly neglected by the generality of mankind—to praise the intricacy of his periods, which are too long to be spoken,—to continue his cool phlegmatic manner of enforcing every truth,—is certainly erroneous. As I said before, the good preacher should adopt no model, write no sermons, study no periods; let him but understand his subject, the language he speaks, and be convinced of the truths he delivers. It is amazing to what heights eloquence of this kind may reach! This is that eloquence the ancient represented as lightning, bearing down every opposer; this the power which has turned whole assemblies into astonishment, admiration, and awe: that is described by the torrent, the flame, and every other instance of irresistible impetuosity.

But to attempt such noble heights, belongs only to the truly great, or the truly good. To discard the lazy manner of reading sermons, or speaking sermons by rote; to set up singly against the opposition of men who are attached to their own errors, and to endeavour to be great, instead of being prudent, are qualities we seldom see united. A minister of the Church of England, who may be possessed of good sense, and some hopes of preferment, will seldom give up such substantial advantages for the empty pleasure of improving society. By his present method he is liked by his friends, admired by his dependents, not displeasing to his bishop; he lives as well,

eats and sleeps as well, as if a real orator, and an eager asserter of his mission; he will hardly, therefore, venture all this to be called, perhaps, an enthusiast; nor will he depart from customs established by the brotherhood, when, by such a conduct, he only singles himself out for their contempt.

Oliver Goldsmith

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man

who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little trades-folks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me ? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest ? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over

again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L—, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come; I have done for myself; I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when, to my utter astonishment, B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deduce, thought I, how did he find out that ? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on

the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer: I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto Perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there

may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do not walk all day long as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do not read in that violent measure with which, having no time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now), just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure: I let it come to me. I am like the man

—that's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.

'Years!' you will say; 'what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty.'

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting-house. I could not conceive of it as

an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

——'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear,
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D—I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all ? or was I a coward simply ? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come

among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch—, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do—mind, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl—, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services! and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my 'works!' There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more Mss. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the

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footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal ? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post-days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the drearly five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white ? What is gone of Black Monday ? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for ? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative.

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Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills ? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer * * , clerk to the Firm of, etc. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

Charles Lamb

THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays, and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In everything that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in King John's days. I know less geography than a schoolboy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first* in my fancy. I make the wildest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend *M.*, with great painstaking, got me

to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have 'small Latin and less Greek.' I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers—not from the circumstance of my being town-born—for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it 'on Devon's leafy shores,'—and am no less at a loss among purely town objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes.—Not that I affect ignorance—but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; everybody is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling. The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort.—

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed, and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally enough addressed his conversation to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare; the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition

coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success—to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage aforesaid—when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now, as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight, and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However, he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Folgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some sort of familiarity with the raw material; and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market; when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me what song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a 'wide solution.'* My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the alms-houses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative merits of provision

* Urn Burial.

for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders; but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder that had been rife about Dalston, and which my friend assured him had gone through five or six schools in that neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher.—He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys and the Linacres: who, believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori-* and their *Spici-legia*; in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to king Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damœtas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's Accidence, set forth! 'To exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect whereas the foundation and groundwork is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame.' How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as 'having been the usage to prefix to some solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus') correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about

grammar-rules with the severity of faith-articles!—' as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the King's Majesties wisdom, who foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurst in changing of schoolmaisters.' What a *gusto* in that which follows: 'wherein it is profitable that he (the pupil) can orderly decline his noun, and his verb.' *His* noun!

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of everything, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of anything. He must be superficially, if I may so say, omniscient. He is to know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, etc., botany, the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis*. You may get a notion of some part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education, addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

All these things—these, or the desire of them—he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors), with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi*. He must seize every occasion—the season of the year—the time of the day—a passing cloud—a rainbow—a waggon of hay—a regiment of soldiers

going by—to inculcate something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of Nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gipsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe—that Great Book, as it has been called—is to him, indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys.—Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times; some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility, or gentry; that he must drag after him to the play, to the Panorama, to Mr. Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the country, to a friend's house, or his favourite watering-place. Wherever he goes this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side than on the other.—Even a child, that 'plaything for an hour,' tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies—as I now hearken to them, by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell—by distance made more sweet—inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so—for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation.—I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime.

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I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own—not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune and felicity of my life—but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind, even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude. The constant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility. You may derive thoughts from others; your way of thinking, the mould in which your thoughts are cast, must be your own. Intellect may be imparted, but not each man's intellectual frame.—

As little as I should wish to be always thus dragged upward, as little (or rather still less) is it desirable to be stunted downwards by your associates. The trumpet does not more stun you by its loudness, than a whisper teases you by its provoking inaudibility.

Why are we never quite at our ease in the presence of a schoolmaster ?—because we are conscious that he is not quite at his ease in ours. He is awkward, and out of place in the society of his equals. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He cannot meet you on the square. He wants a point given him, like an indifferent whist-player. He is so used to teaching, that he wants to be teaching *you*. One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were anything but methodical, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the

method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes. The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse, or thin. They do not *tell* out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal or didactive hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society than the other can his inclinations. He is forlorn among his coevals; his juniors cannot be his friends.

"I take blame to myself," said a sensible man of this profession, writing to a friend respecting a youth who had quitted his school abruptly, "that your nephew was not more attached to me. But persons in my situation are more to be pitied than can well be imagined. We are surrounded by young, and, consequently, ardently affectionate hearts, but *we* can never hope to share an atom of their affections. The relation of master and scholar forbids this. *How pleasing this must be to you, how I envy your feelings!* my friends will sometimes say to me, when they see young men whom I have educated, return after some years' absence from school, their eyes shining with pleasure, while they shake hands with their old master, bringing a present of game to me, or a toy to my wife, and thanking me in the warmest terms for my care of their education. A holiday is begged for the boys; the house is a scene of happiness; I, only, am sad at heart.—This fine-spirited and warm-hearted youth, who fancies he repays his master with gratitude for the care of his boyish years—this young man—in the eight long years I watched over him with a parent's anxiety, never could repay me with one look of genuine feeling. He was proud, when I praised; he was submissive, when I reproved him; but he did never *love* me—and what he now mistakes for gratitude and kindness for me, is but the pleasant sensation which all persons feel at revisiting the scenes of their boyish hopes and fears; and the seeing on equal terms the man they

were accustomed to look up to with reverence. My wife, too," this interesting correspondent goes on to say, " my once darling Anna, is the wife of a schoolmaster.—When I married her—knowing that the wife of a schoolmaster ought to be a busy notable creature, and fearing that my gentle Anna would ill supply the loss of my dear bustling mother, just then dead, who never sat still, was in every part of the house in a moment, and whom I was obliged sometimes to threaten to fasten down in a chair, to save her from fatiguing herself to death—I expressed my fears that I was bringing her into a way of life unsuitable to her; and she, who loved me tenderly, promised for my sake to exert herself to perform the duties of her new situation. She promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not woman's love perform ?—My house is managed with a propriety and decorum unknown in other schools; my boys are well fed, look healthy, and have every proper accommodation; and all this performed with a careful economy, that never descends to meanness. But I have lost my gentle *helpless* Anna! When we sit down to enjoy an hour of repose after the fatigue of the day, I am compelled to listen to what have been her useful (and they are really useful) employments through the day, and what she proposes for her to-morrow's task. Her heart and her features are changed by the duties of her situation. To the boys, she never appears other than the *master's wife*, and she looks up to me as the *boys' master*; to whom all show of love and affection would be highly improper, and unbecoming the dignity of her situation and mine. Yet *this* my gratitude forbids me to hint to her. For my sake she submitted to be this altered creature, and can I reproach her for it ?"—For the communication of this letter, I am indebted to my cousin Bridget.

Charles Lamb

A SENSITIVE AGITATOR

(Richard Cobden)

Twenty-three years ago—and it is very strange that it should be so many years—when Mr. Cobden first began to hold Free-trade meetings in the agricultural districts, people there were much confused. They could not believe the Mr. Cobden they saw to be the "Mr. Cobden that was in the papers." They expected a burly demagogue from the North, ignorant of rural matters, absorbed in manufacturing ideas, appealing to class prejudices—hostile and exciting hostility. They saw a "sensitive and almost slender man, of shrinking nerve, full of rural ideas, who proclaimed himself the son of a farmer, who understood and could state the facts of agricultural life far better than most agriculturists, who was most anxious to convince every one of what he thought the truth, and who was almost more anxious not to offend any one." The tradition is dying out, but Mr. Cobden acquired, even in those days of Free-trade agitation, a sort of agricultural popularity. He excited a personal interest, he left what may be called a *sense* of himself among his professed enemies. They were surprised at finding that he was not what they thought; they were charmed to find that he was not what they expected; they were fascinated to find what he was. The same feeling has been evident at his sudden death—a death at least which was to the mass of occupied men sudden. Over political Belgravia—the last part of English society Mr. Cobden ever cultivated—there was a sadness. Every one felt that England had lost an individuality which it could never have again, which was of the highest value, which was in its own kind altogether unequalled.

What used to strike the agricultural mind, as different from what they fancied, and most opposite to a Northern agitator, was a sort of playfulness. They could hardly believe that the lurking smile, the perfectly magical humour which they were so much struck by, could be that of a "Manchester man." Mr. Cobden used to say, "I have as much right as any man to call myself the representative of the tenant farmer, for I am a farmer's son, and the son of a Sussex farmer." But agriculturists keenly felt that this was not the explanation of the man they saw. Perhaps they could not have thoroughly explained, but they perfectly knew that they were hearing a man of singular and most peculiar genius, fitted as if by "natural selection" for the work he had to do, and not wasting a word on any other work or anything else, least of all upon himself.

Mr. Cobden was very anomalous in two respects. He was a sensitive agitator. Generally, an agitator is a rough man of the O'Connell type, who says anything himself, and lets others say anything. You "peg into me and I will peg into you, and let us see which will win," is his motto. But Mr. Cobden's habit and feeling were utterly different. He never spoke ill of any one. He arraigned principles, but not persons. We fearlessly say that after a career of agitation of thirty years, not one single individual has—we do not say a valid charge, but a producible charge—a charge which he would wish to bring forward against Mr. Cobden. You cannot find the man who says, "Mr. Cobden said this of me, and it was not true." This may seem trivial praise, and on paper it looks easy. But to those who know the great temptations of actual life it means very much. How would any other great agitator, O'Connell or Hunt or Cobbett look, if tried by such a test? Very rarely, if even ever in history, has a man achieved so much by his

words—been victor in what was thought at the time to be a class struggle—and yet spoken so little evil as Mr. Cobden. There is hardly a word to be found, perhaps, even now, which the recording angel would wish to blot out. We may on other grounds object to an agitator who lacerates no one, but no watchful man of the world will deny that such an agitator has vanquished one of life's most imperious and difficult temptations.

Perhaps some of our readers may remember as vividly as we do a curious instance of Mr. Cobden's sensitiveness. He said at Drury Lane Theatre, in tones of feeling, almost of passion, curiously contrasting with the ordinary coolness of his nature, "I could not serve with Sir Robert Peel." After more than twenty years, the curiously thrilling tones of that phrase still live in our ears. Mr. Cobden alluded to the charge which Sir Robert Peel had made, or half made, that the Anti-Corn Law League and Mr. Cobden had, by their action and agitation, conduced to the actual assassination of Mr. Drummond, his Secretary, and the intended assassination of himself—Sir Robert Peel. No excuse or palliation could be made for such an assertion except the most important one, that Peel's nerves were as susceptible and sensitive as Mr. Cobden's. But the profound feeling with which Mr. Cobden spoke of it is certain. He felt it as a man feels an unjust calumny, an unfounded stain on his honour.

Mr. Disraeli said on one occasion (and he has made many extraordinary assertions, but this is about the queerest), "Mr. Cobden had a profound reverence for tradition." If there is any single quality which Mr. Cobden had not, it was traditional reverence. But probably Mr. Disraeli meant what was most true, that Mr. Cobden had a delicate dislike of offending other men's opinions. He dealt with them tenderly. He did not like to have his own creed coarsely attacked, and he did—he

could not help doing—as he would be done by; he never attacked any man's creed coarsely or roughly, or in any way except by what he in his best conscience thought the fairest and justest argument.

This sensitive nature is one marked peculiarity in Mr. Cobden's career as an agitator, and another is, that he was an agitator for men of business.

Generally speaking, occupied men charged with the responsibilities and laden with the labour of grave affairs are jealous of agitation. They know how much may be said against any one who is responsible for anything. They know how unanswerable such charges nearly always are, and how false they easily may be. A capitalist can hardly help thinking, "Suppose a man was to make a speech against my mode of conducting my own business, how much he would have to say!" Now it is an exact description of Mr. Cobden, that by the personal magic of a single-minded practicability he made men of business abandon this objection. He made them rather like the new form of agitation. He made them say, "How business-like, how wise, just what it would have been right to do."

Mr. Cobden of course was not the discoverer of the Free-trade principle. He did not first find out that the Corn Laws were bad laws. But he was the most effectual of those who discovered how the Corn Laws were to be repealed, how Free-trade was to change from a doctrine of the *Wealth of Nations* into a principle of tariffs and a fact of real life. If a thing was right, to Mr. Cobden's mind it ought to be done; and as Adam Smith's doctrines were admitted on theory, he could not believe that they ought to lie idle, that they ought to be "bedridden in the dormitory of the understanding."

Lord Houghton once said, "In my time political economy books used to begin, 'Suppose a man on an island.'"

Mr. Cobden's speeches never began so. He was altogether a man of business speaking to men of business. Some of us may remember the almost arch smile with which he said, "The House of Commons does not seem quite to understand the difference between a cotton mill and a print work." It was almost amusing to him to think that the first assembly of the first mercantile nation could be, as they were and are, very dim in their notions of the most material divisions of their largest industry. It was this evident and first hand familiarity with real facts and actual life which enabled Mr. Cobden to inspire a curiously diffused confidence in all matter-of-fact men. He diffused a kind of "economical faith." People in those days had only to say, "Mr. Cobden said so," and other people went and "believed it."

Mr. Cobden had nothing in the received sense classical about his oratory, but it is quite certain that Aristotle, the greatest teacher of the classical art of rhetoric, would very keenly have appreciated his oratory. This sort of economical faith is exactly what he would most have valued, what he most prescribed. He said: "A speaker should convince his audience that he was a likely person to know." This was exactly what Mr. Cobden did. And the matter-of-fact philosopher would have much liked Mr. Cobden's habit of "coming to the point." It would have been thoroughly agreeable to his positive mind to see so much of clear, obvious argument. He would not, indeed, have been able to conceive a "League Meeting." There has never, perhaps, been another time in the history of the world when excited masses of men and women hung on the words of one talking political economy. The excitement of these meetings was keener than any political excitement of the last twenty years, keener infinitely than any which there is now. It may be said, and truly, that the interest of the subject was

Mr. Cobden's felicity, not his mind; but it may be said with equal truth that the excitement was much greater when he was speaking than when any one else was speaking. By a kind of keenness of nerve, he said the exact word most fitted to touch, not the bare abstract understanding, but the quick individual perceptions of his hearers.

We do not wish to make this article a mere panegyric. Mr. Cobden was far too manly to like such folly. His mind was very peculiar, and like all peculiar minds had its sharp limits. He had what we may call a supplementary understanding, that is, a bold, original intellect, acting on a special experience, and striking out views and principles not known to or neglected by ordinary men. He did not possess the traditional education of his country, and did not understand it. The solid heritage of transmitted knowledge has more value, we believe, than he would have accorded to it. There was too a defect in business faculty not identical, but perhaps not altogether without analogy. The late Mr. James Wilson used to say, "Cobden's administrative power I do not think much of, but he is most valuable in counsel, always original, always shrewd, and not at all extreme." He was not altogether equal to meaner men in some beaten tracks and pathways of life, though he was far their superior in all matters requiring an original stress of speculation, an innate energy of thought.

It may be said, and truly said, that he has been cut off before his time. A youth and manhood so spent as his well deserved a green old age. But so it was not to be. He has left us, quite independently of his positive works, of the repeal of the Corn Laws, of the French treaty, a rare gift—the gift of a unique character. There has been nothing before Richard Cobden like him in English history, and perhaps there will not be anything like him. And his character is of the simple,

emphatic, picturesque sort which most easily, when opportunities are given as they were to him, goes down to posterity. May posterity learn from him! Only last week we hoped to have learned something ourselves.

> But what is before us we know not,
> And we know not what shall succeed.

Walter Bagehot

WAR AND HUMAN PROGRESS

An Address delivered on the Huxley Foundation to the University of Birmingham in 1916

I

A school of thinkers has arisen which, not content with maintaining war to be a necessary factor in the relations between states, as being the only ultimately available method of settling their disputes, declares it to be a method in itself wholesome and socially valuable. To these thinkers it is not an inevitable evil, but a positive good—a thing not merely to be expected and excused, but to be desired for the benefits it confers on mankind. This school challenges the assumptions of the lovers of peace and denounces their projects of disarmament and arbitration as pernicious. War, it seems, is a medicine which human society needs, and which must be administered at frequent intervals; for it is the only tonic capable of bracing up the character of a nation.

Such doctrines are a natural result of the system of thought which exalts the functions and proclaims the supremacy of the State. The State stands by Power. The State is Power. Its power rests upon force. By force it keeps order and executes the law within its limits. Outside its limits there is no law, but only force. Neither is there any morality. The State is a law unto itself, and owes no duty to other states. Self-preservation is the principle of its being. Its Might is Right, the only possible Right. War, or the threat of war, is the sole means by which the State can make its will prevail against

other states; and where its interest requires war, to war it must resort, reckless of the so-called rights of others.

This modern doctrine bases itself on two main arguments. One is drawn from the realm of animated nature, the other from history. Both lines of argument are meant to show that all progress is achieved by strife. Among animals and plants it is Natural Selection and the Struggle for life that have evolved the higher forms from the lower, destroying the weaker species, and replacing them by the stronger. Among men it is the same process of unending conflict that has enabled the higher races and the more civilized states to overcome the lower and less advanced, either extinguishing them altogether, or absorbing them and imposing upon such of them as remain, the superior type of the victors.

Let us turn to the second, that is to say, the argument from history. It is alleged that the record of all that man has done and suffered is largely a record of constant strife—a fact undeniably true—and that thereby the races and nations and states which are now able to do most for the further advance of mankind have prevailed. They have prevailed by war; war, therefore, has been the means, and the necessary means, of that predominance which has enabled them to civilize the best parts of the globe.

Before entering this part of the enquiry, let us see what Progress means. It is a term which covers several quite different things.

There is Material progress, by which I understand an increase in wealth, that is, in the commodities useful to man, which give him health, strength, and longer life, and make his life easier, providing more comfort and more leisure, and thus enabling him to be more physically efficient, and to escape from

that pressure of want which hampers the development of his whole nature.

There is Intellectual progress—an increase in knowledge, a greater abundance of ideas, the training to think, and think correctly, the growth in capacity for dealing with practical problems, the cultivation of the power to enjoy the exercise of thought and the pleasures of letters and art.

There is Moral progress, a thing harder to define, but which includes the development of those emotions and habits which make for happiness—contentment and tranquillity of mind, the absence of the more purely animal and therefore degrading vices (such as intemperance and sensuality in its other forms), the control of the violent passions, good-will and kindliness toward others—in fact all the things which fall within the philosophical conception of a life guided by right reason. People have different ideas of what constitutes happiness and virtue, but these things are at any rate included in every such conception.

A further preliminary question arises. Is human progress to be estimated as respects the point to which it raises the few who have high mental gifts and the opportunity of obtaining an education fitting them for intellectual enjoyment and intellectual vocations, or is it to be measured by the amount of its extension to and diffusion through each nation, meaning the nation as a whole—the average man as well as the superior spirits ? You may sacrifice either the many to the few—as was done by slavery—or the few to the many, or the advance may be general and proportionate in all classes.

Again, when we think of Progress, are we to think of the world as a whole, or only of the stronger and more capable races and states ? If the stronger rise upon the prostrate bodies of the weaker, is this clear gain to the world, because the

stronger will ultimately do more for the world, or is the loss and suffering of the weaker to be brought into the account? I do not attempt to discuss these questions. It is enough to note them as fit to be remembered; for perhaps all three kinds of progress ought to be differently judged if a few leading nations only are to be regarded, or if we are to think of all mankind.

Now let us address ourselves to history. Does history show that progress has come more through and by war or through and by peace? It would be tedious to pursue an examination of the question all down the annals of mankind from the days when authentic records begin; but we may take a few of those salient instances to which the advocates of the war doctrine and those of the peace doctrine would appeal as sustaining their respective theses. Let us divide these instances into four classes, as follows:

(1) Instances cited to show that War promotes Progress.

(2) Instances cited to show that Peace has failed to promote Progress.

(3) Instances cited to show that War has failed to promote Progress.

(4) Instances cited to show that Peace promotes Progress.

I begin with the cases in which war is alleged to have been the change of progress.

It is undeniable that war has often been accompanied by an advance in civilization. If we were to look for progress only in times of peace, there would have been little progress to discover, for mankind has lived in a state of practically continuous warfare. The Egyptian and Assyrian monarchs were always fighting. The Book of Samuel speaks of spring as the time when kings go forth to battle, much as we should speak of autumn as the time when men go forth to shoot deer.

Things have not greatly improved since those distant days, though latterly men have become accustomed to think of peace as the normal, war as the abnormal or exceptional, relation of states to one another. In the ancient world, as late as the days of Roman conquest, a state of peace was the rare exception among civilized states as well as barbarous tribes. But Carthage, like her Phoenician mother-city, went on building up a mighty commerce till Rome smote her down, and the Hellenic people, in its many warring cities, went on producing noble poems and profound philosophical speculations, and rearing majestic temples and adorning them with incomparable works of sculpture, and all this in the intervals of their fighting with their neighbours of the same and other races. The case of the Greeks proves that War and Progress are compatible.

The case of Rome is still more often dwelt upon. Her material greatness was due to the conquests which made her mistress of the world. She also achieved intellectual greatness in her poets and orators and jurists, and by her literature and her laws contributed immensely to the progress of mankind. How far are these achievements to be credited to that long course of conquest ?

The spirit of the Roman people was sustained at a high level by military triumphs, as discipline and the capacity for organization and united national action were also engendered and sustained. But it is to be noted that, although the Romans had shown great political intelligence in creating and working their curiously complex constitution, their literary production attained no high level until Hellenic influences had worked upon it. To these influences, more than to any material causes, its excellence is due. Nor did the creative epoch last long. War continued; but production declined both in letters and in art after the days of the great warrior Trajan, though there was

more fighting than ever. The waning strength of the Empire, as well as the economic decay of Italy, has been justly attributed in large measure to the exhaustion by warfare of the old Italian stock.

In the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, when civilization had greatly advanced in southern and western Europe, the phenomena of ancient Greece were repeated. Incessant wars between the cities of Italy did not prevent the growth of a brilliant literature and an even more brilliant art. It is, however, to be noted that, while the fighting was universal, the literature was confined to comparatively few centres, and there were places like the Neapolitan South, in which high artistic talent was rare. There is nothing in Italian history to show any causal connection between intellectual activity and the practice of war. The same may be said of France. The best work in literature and art was done in a time of comparative tranquillity under Louis XIV., not in the more troubled days of the Hundred Years' War with England and of the religious wars of the sixteenth century.

The capital instance of the association of war with the growth and greatness of a state is found in Prussia. One may say that her history is the source of the whole thesis and the basis of the whole argument. It is a case of what, in the days when the students of my generation were learning logic at the University of Oxford, we used to call the "induction from a single instance." Prussia, then a small state, began her upward march under the warlike and successful prince whom her people call the Great Elector. Her next long step to greatness was taken by Frederick II., again by a course of successful warfare, though doubtless also by means of a highly organized, and, for those days, very efficient administration. Voltaire said of Frederick's Prussia that its trade was war. The close of the

Napoleonic wars further enlarged her territory. Three successful wars—those of 1864, 1866 and 1870-71—made her the nucleus of a united German nation and the leading military power of the Old World.

Ever since those victories her industrial production, her commerce, and her wealth have rapidly increased, while at the same time scientific research has been prosecuted with the greatest vigour and on a scale unprecedentedly large. These things were no doubt achieved during a peace of forty-three years. But it was what one may call a belligerent peace, full of thoughts of war and preparations for war. There is no denying that the national spirit has been carried to a high point of pride, energy, and self-confidence, which have stimulated effort in all directions and secured extraordinary efficiency in civil as well as in military administration. Here, then, is an instance in which a state has grown by war and a people has been energized by war.

But before drawing any conclusions from this solitary instance three questions must be asked:

Will the present conflict* be attended by such a success as to lead the Prussian people to approve the policy which this war spirit has inspired?

Even supposing that the nation is not defeated and humbled in the struggle, may not its material prosperity be thrown back and its internal tranquillity impaired?

May not the national character turn out to have suffered a declension which it will take long to cure?

Results cannot be judged at the moment. What people was ever prouder of its world-dominion than the Romans at the time of Augustus? Yet the seeds of decline were already

* The Great War of 1914-18.

sown. Within a century, men like Tacitus had begun to note the signs of a slowly approaching dissolution, and within two centuries more the dissolution was at hand. To this it may be added that the advance of any single state by violent methods may involve greater harm to the world than the benefits which that state expects to gain for itself, or than those which it proposes to confer upon its neighbours by imposing its civilization upon them.

I pass to another set of cases, those in which it is argued that the absence of war has meant the absence of progress. Such cases are rare, because so few countries have enjoyed, or had the chance of suffering from, periods of long peace. Two, however, may be referred to. One is supplied by the Spanish dominions in America from the middle of the sixteenth till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they threw off the yoke of the mother-country. These vast countries, stretching from California to Patagonia, lay lapped in a peace disturbed only by the occasional raids of Dutch or British sea-rovers, and by skirmishes, rarely severe, with native Indian tribes. The Spanish colonies certainly did stagnate, and made no sensible advance either materially or intellectually. But peace was not the cause of their stagnation. It may be easily explained by the facts that they were ruled by a government at once autocratic and incapable, and that they lived so far from the European world of ideas as to be hardly affected by its vivifying influences. Such causes were amply sufficient to arrest progress.

The other case, often cited, is that of China. She is supposed to have become flaccid, feeble, immovably conservative, because her people, long unaccustomed to war, have contracted a pacific temper. In this statement there is some exaggeration, for there has always been a good deal of fighting on the outskirts of the Chinese Empire; and in the Tae Ping insurrection forty

years ago millions of men are said to have been killed. It must also be remembered that in Art, at least—one of the activities in which the Chinese hold a leading place—there have been frequent changes and some brilliant revivals during the centuries of peace. China reached in comparatively early times a civilization very remarkable on its moral and intellectual as well as on its material side. That her subsequent progress was slow, sometimes hardly discernible, is mainly attributable to her complete isolation, with no nation near her from which she had anything to learn, because the tribes to the south-west and west—tribes constantly occupied in war—were far inferior to her. Lucky has it been for the rest of the world that her three hundred and fifty millions, belonging to a race both physically strong and capable of discipline, have been of a pacific temper, valuing trade and industry, artistic creation and skill in literary composition, as objects worthier of man than martial prowess.

Whoever travels among the Chinese sees that, peaceful as they are, they are anything but a decadent or exhausted race. Nor is it idle to remark that the Japanese, a really military people, had during many centuries made no more progress than their Chinese teachers, and for the same reason: *viz.* that they had remained, down to our own time, cut off, and that by their own wish, from all the stimulating influences which the white races were exerting upon one another.

Next, let us take the cases which show that there have been in many countries long periods of incessant war with no corresponding progress in the things that make civilization. I will not speak of peoples tribally organized, among the more advanced of which may be placed the Albanians and the Pathans and the Turkomans, while among the more backward were the North American Indians and the Zulus. But one may cite the case

of the civilized regions of Asia under the successors of Alexander, when civilized peoples, distracted by incessant strife, did comparatively little for the progress of arts or letters or government, from the death of the great conqueror till they were united under the dominion of Rome and received from her a time of almost unbroken tranquillity.

The Thirty Years' War is an example of long-continued fighting, which, far from bringing progress in its train, inflicted injuries on Germany from which she did not recover for nearly two centuries. Nearer our times, there has been more fighting in South and Central America, since the Wars of Independence, than in any other civilized countries. Yet can any one say that anything has been gained by the unending civil wars and revolutions, or those scarcely less frequent conflicts between the several republics, like that terrible one thirty years ago in which Peru was overcome by Chile? Or look at Mexico. Except during the years when the stern dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz kept order and equipped the country with roads and railways, her people have made no perceptible advance, and stand hardly higher to-day than when they were left to work out their own salvation a hundred years ago. Social and economic conditions have doubtless been against her. All that need be remembered is that warfare has not bettered those conditions, or improved the national character.

Last of all we come to cases in which periods of peace have been attended by an increase in national prosperity and by intellectual development. These periods have been few and generally short, for (as already observed) war has been everywhere the rule and peace the exception. Nevertheless, one may point to instances like that of the comparative order and repose which England enjoyed after the Wars of the Roses. There were some foreign wars under the Tudors; there were

brilliant achievements and adventures on the seas. There were some few internal revolts under Elizabeth. But the great bulk of the nation was left free to prosper by agriculture and trade and to produce great writers. It was the century of More and Bacon and Harvey, of Sidney and Spenser and Shakespeare. Two similar instances are furnished by the rapid progress of Scotland after the Revolution of 1688-89 gave her internal peace, and the similar progress of Norway from 1814 till our own days. The annals of Switzerland since 1815 and those of Belgium since her creation in 1832 have shown that a peace maintained during two generations is compatible, not only with the rapid growth of industrial prosperity, but also with the preservation of a courageous and patriotic spirit, ready to face the dangers of war.

II

If this hasty historical survey has, as I frankly admit, given us few positive and definite results, the reason is plain. Human progress is affected by so many conditions besides the presence or absence of fighting, that it is impossible in any given case to pronounce that it has been chiefly due either to war or to peace. Two conclusions, however, we may claim to have reached, though they are rather negative than positive. One is that war does not necessarily arrest progress. Peoples may advance in thought, literature, and art while they are fighting. The other is that war cannot be shown to have been a cause of progress in anything except the wealth or material power of a state which extends its dominions by conquest or fills its coffers by tribute extorted from the vanquished.

In those cases, however, where the victorious state has gained materially, there are two other things to be considered. One is the possible loss to the conqueror of the good-will of other

nations who may reprobate its methods or fear its aggressive tendencies. Another is the political injury it may suffer by sacrificing, as usually happens with military states, its domestic freedom to its achievements in war, or the moral injury which the predominance of warlike ideals is apt to bring to national character. And if we extend our view to take in the general gain or loss to world-progress, the benefits reaped by the victorious state may be more than counterbalanced by the harm inflicted on the vanquished. When the Macedonian kings destroyed the freedom of Greece, did not mankind lose far more than Macedon gained?

The weakness of the argument which recommends and justifies war by the suggestion that it is by war that the foremost races and states have established their position may be very briefly stated. War has been practically universal. All the races and states have fought, some better, some worse. The best fighters have not always succeeded, for they may have been fewer in number. There is no necessary connection between fighting quality and intellectual quality. True it is that some of the intellectually gifted peoples have also been warlike peoples. The Greeks were; so are the French and the Germans. But the Turks, who are good fighters, are good for nothing else; and the dull Spartans fought better, on land at least, than the bright Athenians. Where the gift for fighting goes with the gift for thought, the success achieved by the intellectual race in war is not a result but a symptom, an indication or evidence of an exceptional natural force. Those races and states that are now in the front rank of civilization have shown their capacity in many other fields besides that of war, and at other times than when they were fighting. All that can safely be said to be proved by history is that a race which cannot fight or will not fight when a proper occasion arises, as, for instance, when it

has to vindicate its independence, is likely to go down, and be subjected or absorbed. Yet the fact that a state is subjected or absorbed does not prove its inferiority. There is no poetical justice in history. The highly gifted race may be small, like Israel, or too much divided to maintain itself against heavy odds, like the Hellenes of antiquity. From 1490 to 1560 Italy was the prey of foreign invaders; but she was doing more for human progress in art and letters than all the other European nations put together.

III

Let us now, in conclusion, try to approach the question in another way. Let us ask what are the consequences which seem naturally to flow from the devotion to war of a nation's gifts and powers, whether physical or intellectual. Reverting to the distinction already drawn between Material, Intellectual, and Moral progress, let us see what are the consequences to be expected in each of these spheres from that process of killing an enemy and capturing or destroying his property which we call War, and how far they will make for the general progress of mankind.

Materially regarded, War is Destruction. It is the destruction of those who are killed, and the reduction, by maiming or disease, of the physical working power of the combatants who survive. It is thus a diminution of the wealth-producing capacity of the combatant nations, whether they be victors or vanquished. It means also the destruction of articles of value, such as crops, railways, bridges, and other buildings, and the contents of buildings, including works of art and libraries. It is an interruption of international trade as well as of production, and therefore a cutting off, for the time being, of that other source of gain which consists in an exchange of commodities produced better

or more cheaply in one country than they can be in another. It involves a further lessening of wealth by the withdrawal from their productive activities of a large number of workers, not only during the actual fighting, but during the time spent in being trained to fight. All these results mean waste of resources and the impoverishment of a nation, with a corresponding shock to its credit.

Against these losses there may be set, in the case of a conquering country, what it acquires by seizure of property, annexation of territory, levying of contributions and of indemnities, although these forcibly gotten gains do not always prosper. There may also be new openings to foreign trade, and victory may evoke an enterprising spirit which will push that trade with new vigour. But such possible indirect benefits are usually far outweighed by the direct loss.

Another loss is also to be considered in estimating the effects of war on a nation. There is not only the diminution of the population by death in battle, but also the reduced vigour and efficiency of the next generation. Those who are killed are presumably the strongest and healthiest men, for it is these who are the first to be drafted into the fighting forces; and it is the finest regiments that suffer most, because they are selected for the most critical and perilous enterprises. Thus, that part of the nation which is best fitted to have a vigorous progeny perishes, and the births of children during, and long after, the war will be chiefly from a male parenthood of a quality below that of the average as it stood before the war. The physique of the French people is said to have suffered palpably from the tremendous drain of the strongest men into the armies of the Revolution and of Napoleon.

In the sphere of intellectual life, the obvious effect of war is to turn the thoughts of a large part of the nation toward

military and naval topics. Inventors busy themselves with those physical and chemical researches which promise results profitable for war. Such researches may incidentally lead to discoveries of value in other fields, just as the practice of military surgery in the field may advance surgical science in general. But the main effect must be to distract from pure science, and from the applications of science to industry, minds that might have done better work for the world in those fields of activity. In general, the thought of a people that delights in war will be occupied with material considerations; and while the things of the body will be prized, the things of the mind will be disparaged, save in so far as they make for military success. A fighting caste will be formed, imposing its peculiar ideals on the people; the standards of value will become more and more practical, and the interest in pure truth and in thought and art for their own sake may decline.

These are conditions not favourable to progress in the higher forms of literary or scientific work. Against them is to be set that stimulus which a great war is held to give to the whole life of a people. When it rouses them to the maximum of effort, and gives them the strongest consciousness of national unity, it may also—so we hear it argued—invigorate them for intellectual creation. It would be rash to deny this possibility, but no one seems to have succeeded in tracing any causal relation between war and the production of great work in art and letters. They have often coincided, but each has often appeared without the other.

Note also how misleading it may be to apply the doctrine of Natural Selection to the phenomena of human society, even so far as it may safely be applied in zoology. Within a nation it is not strength alone, whether physical or intellectual, that brings success. The power of self-control, the talent for

co-operating with others, the capacity for inspiring confidence, are no less important both in securing influence for the possessor of these gifts and in contributing to the unity and energy of a nation. Similarly a nation's vitality consists not only in the physical and mental powers of its members, but also in their moral qualities, their patriotism, their capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice, their good faith and uprightness, their respect for law as law—qualities to which the Romans, for instance, were wont to ascribe their greatness. Natural Selection assumes the rule of Force. But Force and Law are opposed: Force Worship is the negation of Right expressed in Law, and those who have been taught to contemn Right and to put their trust in Force may not only injure themselves, but raise up fears and hatreds against them in their neighbour nations.

As respects the ethical side of life, soldiering and the preparation for soldiering produce a type of character marked by discipline and the habit of obedience. The Spartans were in the ancient world the example of a people who excelled in these qualities, uniting to them, however, an equally marked insensibility to the charms of poetry and art. They produced no literature, and seemed to value none except martial songs. Discipline has its worth, but it may imply some loss of individuality; obedience is useful, but (except with the highly intelligent) it involves some loss of initiative. If it increases physical courage, it may depress that moral courage which recognizes allegiance to Right rather than to the Might of the State. War gives opportunities for the display, by those serving in the field, of some exalted virtues, such as courage, self-sacrifice, devotion to the common cause. So, likewise, does religious persecution, but we do not therefore persecute. Tennyson, writing his *Maud* at the beginning of the Crimean War, seems to have expected these virtues to be evoked by that war, to

pervade the whole people, and to effect a moral regeneration of Britain. Did that happen? And if it happened, did it endure? Did it happen in other countries where it was expected, as, for instance, in the United States after the Civil War? Is such regeneration a natural fruit of war?

The courage and the patriotism of those who fight are splendid, but we have to think of the nation as a whole, non-combatants as well as combatants. May not much depend on the causes which have brought about an appeal to arms and the motives which inspire the combatants? A war of oppression, stimulated by national pride and ambition, may have a different moral effect from one that is undertaken to repel a wanton attack, to defend an innocent neutral state, to save peaceful peoples from a danger to their liberties, and protect the whole world from a menace to the sacred principles of justice and humanity.

Believing the war we are now waging to be such a war, we cannot but hope that the unspeakable sufferings and sorrows it has brought to nearly every home in Britain may be largely compensated by a purifying of the heart, an increased spirit of self-sacrifice, and a raising of our national and personal ideals.

On a review of the whole matter, it will appear that war, since it is destruction, does not increase, but reduces, national wealth, and therefore cannot be a direct cause of material progress. As it exalts physical strength and the principle of Force as against the mind and the love of truth and the pleasures of thought and knowledge, war, except so far as the particular department of military science is concerned, cannot be deemed a cause of intellectual progress. As it depresses the individual and exalts the State, the thing we call Militarism places the conception of Might above that of Right, and creates a type of character in which the harsher and, what one may call the

heathen, virtues are exalted above those which the Gospel has taught and through which the moral elevation of the world has been secured.

What, then, are the causes to which the progress of mankind is due? It has come partly, no doubt, if not by strife, yet at any rate in the course of competition. But the chief cause is the exercise of creative thought in the sphere of ideas, in scientific discovery, in inventions. Now Thought, as we have seen, is more often hindered than helped by war. It is the races that know how to think, not the far more numerous races that excel in fighting rather than in thinking, that have led the world. Thought, in the form of invention and scientific inquiry, has given us those improvements in the arts of life and in the knowledge of nature by which material progress and comfort have been obtained. Thought has produced literature, philosophy, art, and (when intensified by emotion) religion—the chief things that make life worth living. Now, the thought of any people is most active when it is brought into contact with the thought of another, because each is apt to lose its variety and freedom of play when it has worked too long upon familiar lines and flowed too long in the channels it has deepened. Hence, Isolation retards progress, while Intercourse quickens it.

The great creative epochs have been those in which one people of natural vigour received an intellectual impulse from the ideas of another, as happened when Greek culture began to penetrate Italy, and, thirteen centuries later, when the literature of the ancients began to work on the nations of the mediaeval world.

Such contact, with the process of learning which follows from it, may happen in or through war, but it happens far oftener in peace; and it is in peace that men have the time and the taste to profit fully by it. A study of history will show that we may,

with an easy conscience, dismiss the doctrine of Treitschke—that war is a health-giving tonic which Providence must be expected constantly to offer to the human race for its own good. The spirit which every class in the community has shown, since August 1914, in volunteering to fight and in fighting has shown that a long peace does not impair the courage and the valour of a people.* Apart altogether from the hopes we entertain for the victory in this war of a cause which we believe to be just, we may desire in the interests of all mankind that its issue should discredit by defeat a theory which is noxious as well as baseless. The future progress of mankind is to be sought, not through the strifes and hatreds of the nations, but rather by their friendly co-operation in the healing and enlightening works of peace, and in the growth of a spirit of friendship and mutual confidence which may remove the causes of war.

Viscount Bryce

* The same may now (1918) be said of the people of the United States.

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

Just now, when everyone is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse*-respectability, to enter on some lucrative profession, and labour therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party, who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savours a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognised in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces, is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for six pences, and in the emphatic Americanism "goes for" them. And while such an one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for those tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate-house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have laboured along and scaled the arduous hill-tops, and when all is done find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and

people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favour of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro, is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honours with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterwards have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle

and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thought.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truantry that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favourite school of Dickens and Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:

"How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is not this the hour of the class? and should'st thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch like a turkey when it spreads its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a

single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx., which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix., which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanour, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meanwhile there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much

looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere of Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many fire-lit parlours; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick,

they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk; they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralysed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuff-box empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway-carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's

business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chamber-maids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result.

You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stock-broker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favour has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half-an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a

compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but whenever there is an element of sacrifice, the favour is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion.

There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set everyone he passed into a good humour; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but, thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and within practical

limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office, than they can tolerate his fractious spirit. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by the scapegrace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life," why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There

are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! You may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labour themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and centre-point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they gave away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

Robert Louis Stevenson

NEW YORK

To land at Hoboken in a quiet drizzle is to sound the depths of desolation. A raw, half-finished, unkempt street confronts you. Along the roadway, roughly broken into ruts, crawls a sad tram. The dishevelled shops bear odd foreign-looking names upon their fronts, and the dark men who lounge at their doors suggest neither the spirit of hustling nor the grandeur of democracy. It is, in truth, not a street, but the awkward sketch of a street, in which all the colours are blurred and the lines drawn awry. And the sense of desolation is heightened by the memory of the immediate past. You have not yet forgotten the pomp of a great steamship. The gracious harbour of New York is still shining in your mind's eye. If the sentiment of freedom be dear to you, you are fresh from apostrophizing the statue of Liberty, and you may have just whispered to yourself that you are breathing a clearer, larger air. Even the exquisite courtesy of the officer who has invited you in the blandest terms to declare that you have no contraband, has belied the voice of rumour and imparted a glow of satisfaction. And then you are thrown miserably into the leaden despair of Hoboken, and the vision of Liberty herself is effaced.

But Hoboken is an easy place wherefrom to escape, and the traveller may pass through it the more cheerfully, because it prepares him for the manifold and bewildering contrasts of New York. The towns of the Old World have alternations of penury and affluence. In them also picturesque squalor obtrudes itself upon an ugly splendour. But New York, above all other cities, is the city of contrasts. As America is less a country than a collection of countries, so New York is not a city—it is

a collection of cities. Here, on the narrow rock which sustains the real metropolis of the United States, is room for men and women of every faith and every race. The advertisements which glitter in the windows or are plastered upon the hoardings suggest that all nationalities meet with an equal and a flattering acceptance. The German regrets his fatherland the less when he finds a brilliant *Bierhalle* waiting for his delight. The Scot no doubt finds the 'domestic' cigar sweeter to his taste if a portrait of Robert Burns adorns the box from which he takes it. The Jew may be supposed to lose the sense of homesickness when he can read the news of every day in his familiar Yiddish. And it is not only in the contrast of nationalities that New York proves its variety. Though Germans, Italians, and Irish inhabit their own separate quarters and frequent their own separate haunts, there are many other lines of division. Nowhere in the world are there sharper, crueller distinctions of riches and poverty, of intelligence and boorishness, of beauty and ugliness. How, indeed, shall you find a formula for a city which contains within its larger boundaries Fifth Avenue and the Bowery, the Riverside Drive and Brooklyn, Central Park and Coney Island?

And this contrast of race and character is matched by the diversity of the city's aspect. Its architecture is as various as its inhabitants. In spite of demolition and utility, the history of New York is written brokenly upon its walls. Here and there you may detect an ancient frame-house which has escaped the shocks of time and chance, and still holds its own against its sturdier neighbours. Nor is the memory of England wholly obliterated. Is there not a homely sound in Maiden Lane, a modest thoroughfare not far from Wall Street? What Englishman can feel wholly abroad if he walk out to the Battery, or gaze upon the austere houses of Washington Square? And do not the two churches of Broadway recall the city of London,

where the masterpieces of Wren are still hedged about by overshadowing office and frowning warehouse? St. Paul's Chapel, indeed, is English both in style and origin. It might have been built in accord with Sir Christopher's own design; and, flanked by the thirty-two storeys of the Park Row Building, it has the look of a small and dainty toy. Though Trinity Church, dedicated to the glory of God and the Astors, stands in an equally strange environment, it is less incongruous, as it is less elegant, than St. Paul's. Its spire falls not more than a hundred feet below the surrounding sky-scrapers, and were it not for its graveyard it might escape notice. Now its graveyard is one of the wonders of America. Rich in memories of Colonial days, it is as lucid a piece of history as survives within the boundaries of New York. The busy mob of cosmopolitans, intent upon trusts and monopolies, which passes its timeworn stones day after day, may find no meaning in its tranquillity. The wayfarer who is careless of the hours will obey the ancient counsel and stay a while. The inscriptions carry him back to the days before the Revolution, or even into the seventeenth century. Here lies one Richard Churcher, who died in 1681, at the tender age of five. And there is buried William Bradford, who printed the first newspaper that ever New York saw, the forefather in a long line of the Yellowest Press on earth. And there is inscribed the name of John Watts, the last Royal Recorder of New York. Thus the wayfarer may step from Broadway into the graveyard of a British colony, and forget, in contemplating the familiar examples of a lapidary style, that there was a tea-party at Boston.

These contrasts are wayward and accidental. The hand of chance has been merciful, that is all; and if you would fully understand New York's self-conscious love of incongruity, it is elsewhere that you must look. Walk along the Riverside Drive,

framed by nature to be, what an enthusiast has called it, "the finest residential avenue in the world." Turn your back to the houses, and contemplate the noble beauty of the Hudson River. Look from the terrace of Claremont upon the sunlit scene, and ask yourself whether Paris herself offers a gayer prospect. And then face the 'high-class residences,' and humble your heart. Nowhere else will you get a clearer vision of the inappropriateness which is the most devoutly worshipped of New York's idols. The human mind cannot imagine anything less like 'residences' than these vast blocks of vulgarity. The styles of all ages and all countries have been recklessly imitated. The homes of the millionaires are disguised as churches, as mosques, as medieval castles. Here you may find a stronghold of feudalism cheek by jowl with the quiet mansion of a colonial gentleman. There Touraine jostles Constantinople; and the climax is reached by Mr. Schwab, who has decreed for himself a lofty pleasure-dome, which is said to resemble Chambord, and which takes its place in a long line of villas, without so much as a turnip-field to give it an air of seclusion or security. In this vain-glorious craving for discomfort there is a kind of *naïveté* which is not without its pathos. One proud lady, whose husband, in the words of a dithyrambic guide-book, "made a fortune from a patent glove-hook," boasts that her mansion has a glass-room on the second floor. Another vain householder deems it sufficient to proclaim that he spent two million dollars upon the villa which shelters him from the storm. In brief, there is scarcely a single palace on the Riverside which may not be described as an antic of wealth, and one wonders what sort of a life is lived within these gloomy walls. Do the inhabitants dress their parts with conscientious gravity, and sit down to dine with the trappings of costume and furniture which belong to their houses? Suppose they did, and suppose in obedience

to a signal they precipitated themselves upon the highway, there would be such a masquerade of fancy dress as the world has never seen.

The Riverside Drive, then, is a sermon in stones, whose text is the uselessness of uncultured dollars. If we judged New York by this orgie of tasteless extravagance, we might condemn it for a *parvenu* among cities, careless of millions and sparing of discretion. We may not thus judge it. New York, if it be a *parvenu*, is often a *parvenu* of taste, and has given many a proof of intelligence and refinement. The home of great luxury, it does not always, as on the Riverside, mistake display for beauty. There are houses in the neighbourhood of Fifth Avenue which are perfect in reticence and suitability. The clubs of New York are a splendid example even to London, the first home of clubs. In Central Park the people of New York possesses a place of amenity and recreation which Europe cannot surpass; and when you are tired of watching the antics of the leisurely chipmunk, who gambols without haste and without fear, you may delight in a collection of pictures which wealth and good management will make the despair and admiration of the world. Much, of course, remains to do, and therein New York is fortunate. Her growing interest in sculpture and architecture is matched by a magnificent opportunity. In the Old World all has been accomplished. Our buildings are set up, our memorials dedicated, our pictures gathered into galleries. America starts, so to say, from scratch; there is no limit to her ambition; and she has infinite money. If the past is ours, the future is hers, and we may look forward to it with curiosity and with hope.

The architects of America have not only composed works in accordance with the old traditions and in obedience to ancient models; they have devised a new style and a new method of

their own. To pack a vast metropolis within a narrow space, they have made mountains of houses. When the rock upon which their city stands proved insufficient for their ambition, they conquered another kingdom in the air. The sky-scrapers which lift their lofty turrets to the heavens are the pride of New York. It is upon them that the returning traveller gazes most eagerly, as he nears the shore. They hold a firmer place in his heart than even the statue of Liberty, and the vague sentiment which it inspires. With a proper vanity he points out to the poor Briton, who shudders at five storeys, the size and grandeur of his imposing palaces. And his arrogance is just. The sky-scraper presents a new view of architecture. It is original, characteristic, and beautiful. Suggested and enforced, as I have said, by the narrowness of the rock, it is suitable to its atmosphere and environment. New York is a southern, sunlit city, which needs protection from the heat and need not fear obscurity. Even where the buildings are highest, the wayfarer does not feel that he is walking at the bottom of a well. But, let it be said at once, the sky-scraper would be intolerable in our grey and murky land. London demands a broad thoroughfare and low houses. These are its only defence against a covered sky and an enveloping fog, and the patriotic Americans who would transplant their sky-scrapers to England merely prove that they do not appreciate the logic and beauty of their own design.

What, then, is a sky-scraper? It is a giant bird-cage, whose interstices are filled with stone or concrete. Though its structure is concealed from the eye, it is impossible not to wonder at its superb effrontery. It depends for its effect, not upon ornament, which perforce appears trivial and inapposite, but upon its mass. Whatever approaches it of another scale and kind is dwarfed to insignificance. The Sub-Treasury of the United

States, for instance, looks like a foolish plaything beside its august neighbours. Where sky-scrapers are there must be no commemorative statues, no monuments raised to merely human heroes. The effigy of Washington in Wall Street has no more dignity than a tin soldier. And as the sky-scraper makes houses of a common size ridiculous, so it loses its splendour when it stands alone. Nothing can surpass in ugliness the twenty storeys of thin horror that is called the Flat-iron; and it is ugly because it is isolated in Madison Square, a place of reasonable dimensions. It is continuity which imparts a dignity to these mammoths. The vast masses which frown upon Wall Street and Broadway are austere, like the Pyramids. They seem the works of giants, not of men. They might be a vast phenomenon of nature, which was before the flood, and which has survived the shocks of earthquake and the passage of the years. And when their summits are lit by the declining sun, when their white walls look like marble in the glow of the reddening sky, they present such a spectacle as many a strenuous American crosses the ocean to see in Switzerland, and crosses it in vain.

New York in truth, is a city of many beauties, and with a reckless prodigality she has done her best to obscure them all. Driven by a vain love of swift traffic, she assails your ear with an incessant din and your eye with the unsightliest railroad that human ingenuity has ever contrived. She has sacrificed the amenity of her streets and the dignity of her buildings to the false god of Speed. Why men worship Speed, a demon who lies in wait to destroy them, it is impossible to understand. It would be as wise and as profitable to worship Sloth. However, the men of New York, as they tell you with an insistent and ingenious pride, are 'hustlers.' They must ever be moving, and moving fast. The 'hustling' probably leads to little enough. Haste and industry are not synonymous.

To run up and down is but a form of busy idleness. The captains of industry who do the work of the world sit still, surrounded by bells and telephones. Such heroes as J. Pierpont Morgan and John D. Rockefeller are never surprised on train or trolley. They show themselves furtively behind vast expanses of plate-glass, and move only to eat or sleep. It is the common citizen of New York who is never quiet. He finds it irksome to stay long in the same place. Though his house may be comfortable, even luxurious, he is in a fever to leave it. And so it comes about that what he is wont to call 'transportation' seems the most important thing in his life. We give the word another signification. To New York it means the many methods of conveying passengers from one point to another. And the methods, various as they are, keep pace with the desires of the restless citizen, who may travel at what pace and altitude he desires. He may burrow, like a rabbit, beneath the ground. If he be more happily normal in his tastes he may ride in a surface car. Or he may fly, like a bird through the air, on an overhead railway. The constant rattle of cars and railways is indescribable. The overhead lines pass close to the first-floor windows, bringing darkness and noise wherever they are laid. There are offices in which a stranger can neither hear nor be heard, and yet you are told that to the accustomed ear of the native all is silent and reposeful. And I can easily believe that a sudden cessation of din would bring an instant madness. Nor must another and an indirect result of the trains and trams which encircle New York be forgotten. The roads are so seldom used that they are permitted to fall into a ruinous decay. Their surface is broken into ruts and yawns in chasms. To drive 'down-town' in a carriage is to suffer a sensation akin to sea-sickness; and having once suffered, you can understand that it is something else than the democratic love of travelling in

common that persuades the people of New York to clamber on the overhead railway, or to take its chance in a tram-car.

Movement, then, noisy and incessant, is the passion of New York. Perhaps it is the brisk air which drives men to this useless activity. Perhaps it is no better than an ingrained and superstitious habit. But the drowsiest foreigner is soon caught up in the whirl. He needs neither rest nor sleep. He too must be chasing something which always eludes him. He too finds himself leaving a quiet corner where he would like to stay, that he may reach some place which he has no desire to see. Even though he mount to the tenth or the twentieth storey, the throb of the restless city reaches him. Wall Street is 'hustling' made concrete. The Bowery is crowded with a cosmopolitan horde which is never still. Brooklyn Bridge and Brooklyn Ferry might be the crossroads of the world. There a vast mob is passing hither and thither, on foot, on boats, on railroads. What are they doing, whither are they going, these scurrying men and women? Have they no business to pursue, no office-stool to sit upon, no typewriting machines to jostle? And when you are weary of 'transportation,' go into the hall of a big hotel, and you will find the same ceaseless motion. On all sides you will hear the *click*, *click*, of telephone and telegram. On all sides you will see eager citizens scanning the tape, which brings them messages of ruin or success. Nowhere, save in a secluded bar or a stately club, will you find a single man content to be alive and to squander the leisure that God has given him.

And with all her undying haste New York is not content. She must still find other means of saving time. And to save time she has strained all the resources of civilization. In that rather dismal thing called 'material progress' she is easily ahead of the world. Never was the apparatus of life so skilfully

turned and handled as in New York. There are no two fixed points which are not easily connected by iron lines. There seems no reason why a citizen of New York should ever walk. If stairs exist, he need not use them, for an express lift, warranted not to stop before the fifteenth floor, will carry him in a few seconds to the top of the highest building. If he open a cupboard door, the mere opening of it lights an electric lamp, and he need not grope after a coat by the dim light of a guttering candle. At his bed-head stands a telephone, and, if he will, he may speak to a friend a thousand miles away without moving from his pillow. But time is saved—of that there is no doubt. The only doubt is, whether it be worth saving. When New York has saved her time, what does she do with it? She merely squanders it in riotous movement and reckless 'transportation.' Thus she lives in a vicious circle—saving time that she may spend it, and spending it that again she may save it. Nor can this material progress be achieved without a loss of what the Old World prizes most highly. To win all the benefits which civilization affords, you must lose peace and you must sacrifice privacy. The many appliances which save our useless time may be enjoyed only by crowds. The citizens of New York travel, live, and talk in public. They have made their choice, and are proud of it. Englishmen are still reckless enough to waste their time in pursuit of individualism, and I think they are wise. For my part, I would rather lose my time than save it, and the one open conveyance of New York which in pace and conduct suits my inclination is the Fifth Avenue Stage.

But New York is unique. It baffles the understanding and defies observation. In vain you search for a standard of comparison. France and England set out many centuries ago from the same point and with the same intention. America has nothing in common, either of purpose or method, with either

of these countries. To a European it is the most foreign city on earth. Untidy but flamboyant, it is reckless of the laws by which life is lived elsewhere. It builds beautiful houses, it delights in white marble palaces, and it thinks it superfluous to level its roads. Eager for success, worshipping astuteness as devoutly as it worships speed, it is yet indifferent to the failure of others, and seems to hold human life in light esteem. In brief, it is a braggart city of medieval courage and medieval cruelty, combining the fierceness of an Italian republic with a perfect faith in mechanical contrivance and an ardent love of material progress.

Here, then, are all the elements of interest and curiosity. Happy are the citizens who watch from day to day the fight that never before has been fought on the same terms. And yet more strangely baffling than the city are the citizens. Who are they, and of what blood and character? What, indeed, is a New Yorker? Is he Jew or Irish? Is he English or German? Is he Russian or Polish? He may be something of all these, and yet he is wholly none of them. Something has been added to him which he had not before. He is endowed with a briskness and an invention often alien to his blood. He is quicker in his movement, less trammelled in his judgments. Though he may lose wisdom in sharpening his wit, the change he undergoes is unmistakable. New York, indeed, resembles a magic cauldron. Those who are cast into it are born again. For a generation some vague trace of accent or habit may remain. The old characteristics must needs hang about the newly arrived immigrant. But in a generation these characteristics are softened or disappear, and there is produced a type which seems remote from all its origins. As yet the process of amalgamation is incomplete, and it is impossible to say in what this hubble-shubble of mixed races will result. Nor have we any clue of

historical experience which we may follow. The Roman Empire included within its borders many lands and unnumbered nationalities, but the dominant race kept its blood pure. In New York and the other great cities of America the soil is the sole common factor. Though all the citizens of the great republic live upon that soil, they differ in blood and origin as much as the East of Europe differs from the West. And it is a mystery yet unpierced that, as the generations pass, they approach nearer and nearer to uniformity, both in type and character.

And by what traits do we recognize the citizen of New York? Of course there is no question here of the cultivated gentleman, who is familiar in Paris and London, and whose hospitality in his own land is an amiable reproach to our own too frequent thoughtlessness, but of the simpler class which confronts the traveller in street and train, in hotel and restaurant. The railway guard, the waiter, the cab-driver—these are the men upon whose care the comfort of the stranger depends in every land, and whose tact and temper are no bad index of the national character. In New York, then, you are met everywhere by a sort of urbane familiarity. The man who does you a service, for which you pay him, is neither civil nor uncivil. He contrives, in a way which is by no means unpleasant, to put himself on an equality with you. With a mild surprise you find yourself taking for granted what in your own land you would resent bitterly. Not even the curiosity of the nigger, who brushes your coat with a whisk, appears irksome. For the habit of years has enabled white man and black to assume a light and easy manner, which in an Englishman, born and trained to another tradition, would appear impertinence.

And familiarity is not the only trait which separates the plain man of New York from the plain man of London. The New Yorker looks upon the foreigner with the eye of patronage.

To his superior intelligence the wandering stranger is a kind of natural, who should not be allowed to roam alone and at large. Before you have been long in the land you find yourself shepherded, and driven with an affability, not unmixed with contempt, into the right path. Again, you do not resent it, and yet are surprised at your own forbearance. A little thought, however, explains the assumed superiority. The citizen of New York has an ingenuous pride and pleasure in his own city and in his own prowess, which nothing can daunt. He is convinced, especially if he has never travelled beyond his own borders, that he engrosses the virtue and intelligence of the world. The driver of a motor-car assured me, with a quiet certitude which brooked no contradiction, that England was cut up into sporting estates for the 'lords,' and that there the working man was doomed to an idle servility. "But," said he, "there is no room for bums here." This absolute disbelief in other countries, combined with a perfect confidence in their own, has persuaded the citizens of New York to look down with a cold and pitiful eye upon those who are so unfortunate as to be born under an effete monarchy. There is no bluster in their attitude, no insistence. The conviction of superiority is far too great for that. They belong to the greatest country upon earth; they alone enjoy the true blessings of freedom; they alone understand the dignity of labour and the spirit of independence; and they have made up their minds kindly but firmly that you shall not forget it.

Thus you carry away from New York a memory of a lively air, gigantic buildings, incessant movement, sporadic elegance, and ingenuous patronage. And when you have separated your impressions, the most vivid and constant impression that remains is of a city where the means of life conquer life itself, whose citizens die hourly of the rage to live.

Charles Whibley

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENGLISH VOYAGES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ON POETRY AND IMAGINATION

Over against the plays of Shakespeare and his fellows, as their natural counterpart, must be set the *Voyages* of Hakluyt; he who would understand the Elizabethan age, and what it meant for England, must know them both. 'The word,' says Chaucer, 'should be cousin to the deed.' In a wider sense than he intended, the word always is cousin to the deed; and the lives that men live express themselves inevitably in the books that they write. That marvellous summer time of the imagination, the Elizabethan age, with all its wealth of flowers and fruit, was the gift to England of the sun that bronzed the faces of the voyagers and of the winds that carried them to the four quarters of the world. Historians of literature have been wont to treat the imaginative growth of the Elizabethan age as if it were a problem of skilful gardening, an instance of high success in the mysteries of transplanting, grafting, forcing, and the like. But what nourished the pale slips brought from abroad? They struck their roots deep in a soil rich with the matter of life, and breathed a genial and stimulating air. The dramatists and poets were the children and inheritors of the Voyagers.

Man's imagination is limited by the horizon of his experience. When he attempts by guesswork to outgo the bounds assigned, his frailty and ignorance stand apparent; he is like a child explaining the world by its doll's house. The irremovable boundaries of knowledge are the same for every age; human sense is feeble, human reason whimsical and vain, human life short and troubled. But every now and then, in the long history

of the race, there is a rift in the cloud, or a new prospect gained by climbing. These are the great ages of the world. Creation widens on the view, and the air is alive with a sense of promise and expectancy. So it was in the age of Elizabeth. The recovery of the classics opened a long and fair vista backwards; the exploration of the New World seemed to lift the curtain on a glorious future. And the English, the little parochial people, who for centuries had tilled their fields and tended their cattle in their island home, cut off from the great movements of European policy, suddenly found themselves, by virtue of their shipping, competitors for the dominion of the earth. It is no wonder that their hearts distended with pride, and, hardening in their strength, gloried. A new sense of exaltation possessed the country, the exaltation of knowledge and power. The rising tide of national enthusiasm flooded the literature of the people, and surprised the dwellers on many a high and dry inland creek.

Charles Lamb, who loved all that is familiar and ancient and homely, somewhere expresses regret that the plays of Shakespeare and some of his brother dramatists hardly ever choose as their theme the simple daily life of the England of their own time, the affairs of the shopkeepers of Cheapside or of the countrymen of Essex. Had the dramatists been of his mind, we should have had no great English drama, and no Shakespeare. The regret felt by Lamb is only natural; he was a true antiquary, and the touch of antiquity has gilded the bucolics and citizens of Shakespeare's time. Vulgarity and stupidity are amiable enough in dead men. But the question at issue was a live question in the time of Elizabeth. The men of the new school turned impatiently away from the self-satisfied insularity and rustic ineptitude of their forebears, and hastened to become citizens of the world. The infection of foreign litera-

tures and foreign travel changed customs and manners so fast that many sober observers stood aghast at the rapidity of the movement, and the country rang with denunciations of the innovators. In a single generation the change was complete. At the time of Hawkins' earlier voyages *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was a comedy of the newest fashion, and the highest reach of English tragedy was still to be sought in the miracle-plays; before he died *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Doctor Faustus* had been seen on the boards of the London theatres. Action and imagination went hand in hand. If the voyages explored new countries and trafficked with strange peoples, the poets and dramatists went abroad too, and rifled foreign nations, returning with far-fetched and dear-bought wares; or explored lonely and untried recesses of the microcosm of man. One spirit of discovery and exultant power animated both seamen and poets. Shakespeare and Marlowe were, no less than Drake and Cavendish, circumnavigators of the world.

The influence of the Voyages upon the great literature of the time has been little recognised, because the reflection of contemporary events in thought and imagination is always indirect, difficult to outline, and utterly unlike common expectation. When exact historians complain of a poet that he does not hold up the mirror to his own time, they are often merely complaining that he is not a reporter, a retailer of names and dates, the dupe of notoriety. Shakespeare, it is often said, tells us more of Italy than of England; yet in Shakespeare's plays only the labels are Italian, while every type of English character from a king to a tinker, is drawn to the life. Othello is a Tudor gentleman. Petruchio, Bassanio, and a dozen others are adventurous Elizabethan gallants. Osric is a courtly gull, Mercutio a courtly wit, Edgar in *Lear* is a noble masquerading as an Abram man, Autolycus is a cony-catcher. All alike

are heightened portraits of the men whom Shakespeare had met and talked to at the Court, in the tavern, or by the roadside. It is true that the names of the great men of his own time seldom occur in his plays. A great living man is celebrated chiefly by poetasters; nor, indeed, were these lacking to celebrate Drake and Frobisher and Howard. A poet commonly prefers to work with human material closer at hand, easier to come at, not hedged around by popular favour or on its guard against intimate research. He will select at his own liking from the life around him, build up his own greatness, and borrow a name from ancient history or fable. But whatever is most characteristic and vital in the life and thought of an age will find utterance in its poetry, none the less. The impressions recorded will perhaps have no very obvious connection with the particular facts of history; they will be those rather that strike the eye and fire the imagination of a child. The romance of sea-faring will express itself not in an account of any one notable exploit, with due credit allotted by name to all who took part in it, but in some such vague memory and sentiment as that of the American poet:

> I remember the back wharves, and the slips,
> And the sea-tides tossing free,
> And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
> And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea.

Poetry speaks only that which it knows, and testifies only that which it has seen. What did the Elizabethan poets know and see of the world of promise revealed by the nagivators?

Some direct and commendatory notice there was of the most famous voyagers by name, and many poems, some of them by good poets, were addressed to the adventurers on setting

forth. The later books of *Albion's England* (1602), for instance, by William Warner, are much concerned with the achievements recorded by Hakluyt, and tribute is paid in passing to Hakluyt himself.

The new-born faith of the English in their national speech took heart of grace from the discoveries of the voyagers. Samuel Daniel, whose poem *Musophilus* (1601) is a long passionate hymn in praise of the new ideals, has expressed in a single couplet the two-fold aspiration of the age:

> What good is like to this,
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading, and the world's delight?

The re-discovered glories of the ancients had for a time cast a damp upon national ambition. It seemed a paltry vanity in a writer of English to hope to win literary immortality for a speech shut up within the limits of a single island, and cut off from close commerce with the countries which inherited the traditions of Greece and Rome. By way of answer to this doubt Daniel points prophetically to the New World. The Ancients civilised their world; another world has been given to the Moderns to civilise; the native gifts of Southern eloquence and poetry may hereafter be 'bettered by the patience of the North,' and may achieve a yet greater fame;

> And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
> The treasure of our tongue? To what strange shores
> This gain of our best glory shall be sent
> To enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
> What worlds in th' yet unformèd Occident
> May come refin'd with the accents that are ours?
> Or who can tell for what great work in hand
> The greatness of our style is now ordained?

What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command?
What thoughts let out, what humours keep restrained?
What mischief it may powerfully withstand,
And what fair ends may thereby be attained?

Before the first acre of land beyond the seas had been effectively added to the dominion of England, the poets had foretold the British Empire. The expansion of England was, in the main, the work of the Eighteenth Century; but the soldiers and statesmen who planted the Empire in India and Canada and the American Colonies, were the successors and pupils of Hakluyt's heroes; it was theirs to build the fabric that had been designed and to fulfil the prophecies that had been uttered in the great age of imagination.

The chief influence of the Voyages on the English imagination is not to be looked for in special tributes or even in exalted prophecies like these. The new ferment wrought in a deep and hidden fashion on the temper and habits of the mind. All preconceived notions and beliefs concerning cosmography, history, politics, and society were made ridiculous by the new discoveries. The world had been opened up by the fanatical self-confidence of visionaries, and had proved to be wilder than their wildest fancies. New kingdoms were to be had for the taking. Powers and virtues unknown to the peoples of the Old World had perhaps been preserved through the ages in remote and fortunate islands. All things became possible; credulity was wiser than experience; and the wonders reported were reckoned merely the first fruits of greater things to come. The society of the Old World meanwhile was rent in twain by the schism in the Christian Church. Great monarchies were tottering to their fall. The signs and portents of the times pointed to the beginning of a new age, when the riches and power of the world should be the prize

of bold adventurers, and courage the only passport to success.

The fantastic adventure of the age and its intimate connection with grave historical events may be well seen in the career of the notorious Tom Stukeley. He was a man of small account, says Camden, 'a ruffian, a riotous spendthrift, and a notable vapourer', who had been disappointed in his hope of obtaining a small official post in Ireland. He offered his services to the Pope, promising to drive the English troops out of Ireland, and to fire the English fleet. To this end he was put in command of some eight hundred Italian soldiers levied at the charges of Spain. He set sail from Civita Vecchia and arrived at Lisbon, where he was to be joined by Sebastian, King of Portugal. Sebastian induced him, by way of preface to the Irish campaign, to lend his force against the Mahomedan powers of Northern Africa; and in 1578, at the battle of Alcazar, where Sebastian and two Moorish kings fell, Stukeley also was slain. By the death of the King of Portugal without a son the way was opened for the Spanish claim, and the attention of King Philip was for years diverted from his intended invasion of England. Stukeley's romantic career was subsequently dramatised for the London public in Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*.

A career like this serves to show how the life of the age acted on its literature. The differences between the Romantic drama of England and the Classic drama of France can never be understood while the question is treated only as a conflict between two literary schools. It is true that France, by position, history, and training was from the first more under the influence of classic literature and ancient theory than ever England had been. But in England, too, when the drama began its course, the partisans of the classical doctrine were first in the field, and made the bravest start. Then the new interests arose, and

overwhelmed them. The echoes of ancient wisdom and shadows of ancient beauty which held the attention of France were drowned and scattered in England by loud voices and fierce lights. Extravagant deeds filled the popular imagination, and could not, by any legerdemain of pedantry, be brought within the prescribed critical compass. If the dramatists refused allegiance to the rules, they were merely following the lead of the adventurers. The fatalism of Greek tragedy, where the end is known before the beginning, could give no real pleasure to a people intoxicated with the delights of surprise, and intolerant of all limitation. In a world where anything may happen, the fairy-story or the romance of adventure is the safest literary model.

The best exemplar of the new style is Marlowe, whose *Tamburlaine* set the fashion followed by Greene and Peele and many others. Without the Voyagers Marlowe is inconceivable. His imagination is wholly pre-occupied with the marvels of the world and his heart possessed by the new-found lust of power. The tasks that Doctor Faustus assigns to his serviceable spirits might have been studied from the reports of travellers:

> I'll have them fly to India for gold,
> Ransack the Ocean for orient pearl,
> And search all corners of the new-found world
> For pleasant fruits and princely delicates; . . . .
> I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
> And chase the Prince of Parma from our land .
> And reign sole king of all our Provinces.

Gold again is the theme of the *Jew of Malta*, and conquest and kingship the inspiration of *Tamburlaine*. The Scythian conqueror, like Shakespeare's Italian gentlemen, is at heart an Englishman. When he tries to tempt the Persian general into

his service, his persuasions savour of the nautical pride of the English:

> Both we will walk upon the lofty cliffs;
> And Christian merchants, that with Russian stems
> Plough up huge furrows in the Caspian Sea,
> Shall vail to us as lords of all the lake.

In 1567 Hawkins fired on a friendly Spanish squadron in Plymouth Sound, to compel the Admiral to lower his flag, and in 1570 Lord Charles Howard of Effingham exacted a like tribute in the open Channel from a Spanish fleet of a hundred and thirty sail which was conveying King Philip's bride-elect from Holland to Spain. Even the name of the Caspian was reminiscent of English adventure. 'Our nation,' says Hakluyt, writing in 1598, 'have adventured their persons, ships and goods, homewards and outwards, fourteen times over the unknown and dangerous Caspian Sea.' It is the dominion of the sea, as well as of the land, that Marlowe's Tamburlaine covets, and his eloquence reaches its highest when the sea is his theme. The defeat of Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks, is a means to an end; the Persian fleet, already in Tamburlaine's control, shall circumnavigate the earth, and join forces with the Turkish Mediterranean squardon of men-of-war and buccaneers. Marlowe was an early friend of Raleigh's, and it is difficult not to read a political meaning into these sounding lines, written just after Drake's expedition of 1585, at a time when Don Antonio, the Portuguese pretender, had taken refuge at the English Court, and was being used by Raleigh as a counter in the great political game:

> So from the East unto the furthest West
> Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.
> The galleys and those pilling brigandines
> That yearly sail to the Venetian Gulf

And hover in the Straits for Christians' wrecks,
Shall lie at anchor in the isle Asant,
Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war,
Sailing along the oriental sea,
Have fetch'd about the Indian Continent,
Even from Persepolis to Mexico,
And thence unto the Straits of Jubalter;
Where they shall meet and join their force in one,
Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale,
And all the ocean by the British shore;
And by this means I'll win the world at last.

As a naval plan of campaign this belongs to the school of Raleigh, who complained that the Queen did things by halves. The immense popular success of *Tamburlaine*, which changed the fortunes of the English drama, was due not solely to the resonance and splendour of the verse or the magic of the strange names. The audience listened to it in a temper quite unlike the temper that Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* begets in the modern reader. This drama of the world at stake was to them a representation of real affairs, and the high speeches of Tamburlaine voiced for them the defiance and the pride of England.

How entirely Marlowe's imagination had been captured by the discoveries and exploits of the navigators is clearly shown in Tamburlaine's dying speech, which expresses all the romance of geography and all the ambition of empire. The Conqueror feels his vital powers failing and, with his sons by his side, calls for a map of the world:

Give me a map; then let me see how much
Is left for me to conquer all the world,
That these, my boys, may finish all my wants.

The map is brought, and he traces on it his victorious progress through Asia and Africa, 'backwards and forwards near five thousand leagues.' The Suez Canal is one of his unfulfilled schemes:

—here, not far from Alexandria,
Whereas the Terrene and the Red Sea meet,
Being distant less than full a hundred leagues,
I meant to cut a channel to them both,
That men might quickly sail to India.

Then, for a legacy to his sons, he points to that part of the world, better than all the rest, which remains to conquer:

Look here, my boys; see, what a world of ground
Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line
Unto the rising of this earthly globe,
Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,
Begins the day with our Antipodes!
And shall I die, and this unconquered?
Lo, here, my sons, are all the golden mines,
Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
More worth than Asia and all the world beside;
And from th' Antarctic Pole eastward behold
As much more land, which never was descried,
Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright
As all the lamps that beautify the sky!
And shall I die, and this unconquered?
Here, lovely boys; what death forbids my life,
That let your lives command in spite of death.

Since the days of Ben Jonson it has been too much the habit of critics to cast ridicule or contempt upon 'the Tamerlanes

and Tamer-Chams of the late age, which had nothing in them but scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant them to the ignorant gaper.' This last speech of Tamburlaine's, like some others that are given to him, is high and serious; Hakluyt, who knew the fascination of the map, and Gilbert, who gave his life in the cause of empire, might say Amen to it.

The sense of liberty and power, and of belief in the capacity and destiny of man, which was quickened by the new discoveries, distinguishes the literature of the Elizabethan age from the great backward-looking periods of romance. It is a literature of youth and hope, with none of the subtle and poignant flavours that are to be tasted in a literature of regret and memory. If Marlowe may in some regards be fitly compared with Shelley, there is no counterpart in Elizabethan literature to the melancholy of Keats. Many old stories, it is true, were borrowed; mediaeval and classical fables were ransacked for themes. But Spenser's chivalry is a convention, and no true revival; he protrays his own age, and his own contemporaries, as they appeared to him; he too is concerned chiefly with the future. Plays like Dekker's *Olde Fortunatus* show the temper that animates Marlowe; the sober moral is almost forgotten in a maze of delightful wonders. But it would be wrong to regard a great literature as nothing more than the home and haunt of a thing so evanescent as the spirit of the age. Poetic imagination sits aloof, and studies enduring themes. Thomas Lodge wrote his gentle pastoral romance of *Rosalynd* on a voyage of discovery and pillage; George Sandys, being arrived off the coast of Virginia with the colonising expedition that succeeded at last, devoted his spare hours to the translation of Ovid. The New World did not obliterate the Old, and the new discoveries did not monopolise the thought of a century.

In the case, therefore, of the greatest poet of all, Shakespeare, it is enough if it can be shown that his imagination was alive to this new world of speculation and opportunity. A poet's predilections are often more truly seen in his illustrations and digressions than in his choice of subject. Sir Walter Raleigh, for instance, in his long, dreary *History of the World* is kept far away from almost all that had engaged his active life. But when he is moved to passion, his mind reverts to the sea. The greatest passages of his book deal with death and mutability, and continually illustrate human life from the experience of voyagers. 'When we once come in sight of the port of death, to which all winds drive us, and when by letting fall that fatal anchor, which can never be weighed again, the navigation of this life takes end; then it is, I say, that our own cogitations (those sad and severe cogitations, formerly beaten from us by our health and felicity) return again, and pay us to the uttermost for all the pleasing passages of our lives past.' And again: 'For myself, if I have in anything served my country, and prized it before my private; the general acceptation can yield me no other profit at this time than doth a fair sunshine day to a seaman after shipwrack, and the contrary no other harm than an outrageous tempest after the port attained.' Images like these, rising to the memory when the thought is most spontaneous and sincere, speak to the habitual workings of the mind, and are more convincing than the most elaborate descriptive sea-piece.

Though he was inland bred, it is certain that Shakespeare knew and loved the sea. The handling of the ship in the *Tempest*, and the talk of the sailors in the storm-scene of *Pericles* have excited the admiration of experienced judges. The single grave charge brought against his competence as a navigator is based on the two allusions in the *Tempest* to the 'glasses'

formerly used as a measure of time at sea, and now superseded by bells. From a comparison of these two passages it seems that Shakespeare believed that the glasses measured hours, whereas they measured half-hours.* He could not have made this mistake if he had been moderately conversant with life at sea. His habitual carelessness, it is true, may be invoked to save his reputation as a seaman. But many other passages of his writing testify rather to a love of the sea than to a love of navigation. Venus, when Adonis breaks away from her, is compared to

> '—one on shore
> Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
> Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
> Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend;
> So did the merciless and pitchy night
> Fold in the object that did feed her sight.'

And his most famous descriptions, like that which occurs in King Henry IV's lament over the unattainable sleep, exhibit a marvellous power of poetic imagination and diction at work upon the material of common knowledge. The seamen, whom

* The passages are: Act I. Sc. ii. l. 240, where, just after the wreck, Prospero asks the time;

> *Ariel.* Past the mid season.
> *Prospero.* At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now.
> Must by us both be spent most preciously.

and Act V. I. 223, at the close of the play, where the Boatswain reports:

> our ship,
> Which but three glasses since we gave out split,—
> Is tight, and yare, and bravely rigged as when
> We first put out to sea.

There is a similar error in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act. II. Sc. i.

he sketches unerringly, were to be met on shore. A real sailor's chanty, unlike any other song in the Plays, is given to Stephano in the *Tempest*:

> 'The master, the swabber, the boatswain, and I,
> The gunner, and his mate,
> Lov'd Moll, Meg, and Marian, and Margery,
> But none of us car'd for Kate.'

This little lyric, with its 'scurvy tune' suggests life ashore, in the taverns of Deptford and Wapping. There is more technical knowledge of the sea than might have been expected in Shakespeare's plays, but no exact inference can be drawn from it.

The extent to which the sea and sea-faring dominated the imagination of Shakespeare may be better judged in more indirect fashion, from his figures and allusions. It is not merely that in at least a dozen of his plays there are sea-faring characters, or voyages, or scenes laid on the sea-coast. There is none of his contemporaries whose works are so full of the sentiment of the sea. To take one play out of many that would serve equally well, in *Othello* the scene is laid at Venice and Cyprus, so that nautical affairs bulk largely in it. But this is not enough to explain the frequency and the magnificence of Shakespeare's allusions. The height of joy and of tragic passion constantly find their most adequate expression in metaphor taken from the sea. So in the meeting of Othello with Desdemona at Cyprus:

> 'O my soul's joy!
> If after every tempest come such calms,
> May the winds blow till they have waken'd death;
> And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
> Olympus-high, and duck again as low
> As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
> 'Twere now to be most happy.'

So, again, in Othello's reply to Iago's counsels of patience:

> 'Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
> Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
> Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up.'

So, again, in Ludovico's last apostrophe to Iago:

> 'O Spartan dog!
> More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea.'

In the greatness of Othello's passion there is the lift and the wash of the sea; in the inhuman treachery of Iago there is its cruelty and its mystery.

There is evidence enough, in well-known passages, of Shakespeare's acquaintance with the discoveries of the voyagers. The name Caliban is almost certainly a distortion of Cannibal, and *Setebos* is a divinity of the Patagonians, described by Master Francis Fletcher, in an account of Drake's great voyage, as 'Settaboth, that is, the Divell, whom they name their great god.' But it was the reports brought home by the Virginian adventurers that set Shakespeare's imagination to work. The colony was planted in 1609; and the first Governor, Lord Delaware, was diligent in building towns and forts and in bringing the Indians under control. Sir George Somers, deputy-Governor, was shipwrecked on the Bermudas, which were in ill repute as the haunt of wicked spirits and foul weather, but were

found by the castaways to be temperate, fruitful and pleasant. The tale of these adventures, brought by word of mouth, or published in *The Discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels* (1610),—a tract by Sylvester Jourdain, one of Sir George Somers' Company,—gave the finest and subtlest wit in the world a theme for a play. The *Tempest* is a fantasy of the New World. It is too full of the ether of poetry, and too many-sided to be called a satire, yet Shakespeare, almost alone, saw the problem of American settlement in a detached light; and a spirit of humorous criticism runs riot in the lighter scenes. The drunken butler, accepting the worship and allegiance of Caliban, and swearing him in by making him kiss the bottle, is a fair representative of the idle and dissolute men who were shipped to the Virginian colony. The situation of Miranda was perhaps suggested by the story of Virginia Dare, granddaughter of Captain John White, the first child born in America of English parents. She was born in 1587 and christened along with Manteo, one of the Indians who had visited England with Captains Amadas and Barlow. That same year she was abandoned, along with the other colonists. In 1607, when the settlement was next renewed, it was reported that there were still seven of the English alive among the Indians, 'four men, two boys, and one maid.' The strange girlhood of this one maid, if she were Virginia Dare, may well have set Shakespeare's fancy working. And the portrait of Caliban, with his affectionate loyalty to the drunkard, his adoration of valour, his love of natural beauty and feeling for music and poetry, his hatred and superstitious fear of his taskmaster, and the simple cunning and savagery of his attempts at revenge and escape—all this is a composition wrought from fragments of travellers' tales, and shows a wonderfully accurate and sympathetic understanding of uncivilised man.

These travellers' tales gave a new import to the old fables of Arcadia and the Golden Age. The poetic idea of the original simplicity and virtue of man seemed to be confirmed by the warrant of sober fact, and steadily gained in acceptance, until, in the Eighteenth Century, it overturned the institutions and disturbed the peace of Europe. Montaigne, in his essay *Of Cannibals*, expresses the view of a philosophic observer. 'I find,' he says, speaking of the Indians, 'that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting that everyone gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country. . . . . They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas in truth we ought rather to call those wild, whose natures we have changed by our artifice, and diverted from the common order. . . . . I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had no knowledge of them: for to my apprehension, what we now see in those nations does not only surpass all the pictures with which the poets have adorned the Golden Age, and all their inventions in feigning a happy state of man, but, moreover, the fancy and even the wish and desire of philosophy itself; so native and so pure a simplicity, as we by experience see to be in them, could never enter into the poet's imagination, nor could they ever believe that human society could have been maintained with so little artifice and human patchwork.' Then follows the famous passage which Shakespeare borrowed for Gonzalo's description of his perfect commonwealth, in the *Tempest*. 'I should tell Plato,' says Montaigne, 'that it is a nation wherein there is no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties; no

employments but those of leisure; no respect of kindred, but common; no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of coin or wine; the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, never heard of. How much would he find his imaginary Republic short of this perfection?'

The humours of this ideal as a practical theory of colonisation tickled Shakespeare's fancy; the combination of the virtues of the Golden Age with that extension of trade and of sovereignty which was aimed at by the explorers made a delightful paradox; and he interrupts Gonzalo's speech with a running fire of scornful comment from the two men of sin. Yet he, too, came under the spell of the Golden Age, and, for all we know, would have been willing to say with Montaigne, 'I am sometimes troubled that we were not sooner acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are.' He had always coveted a retreat from the struggles and clamour of the Court and City; but the retreats pictured in his later plays have a primitive simplicity which is lacking in the pleasure-gardens of the King of Navarre and the masquerading of the forest of Arden. Perdita, who, like Miranda, is prompted in all her words and actions by a plain and holy innocence, is something of a devotee of Nature. She will have no flowers in her garden, not the fairest of the season, if Art has had a share in their production; and she is deaf to the reproofs of experience. The religion in which Belarius, the upright banished courtier in *Cymbeline*, educates his adopted sons is a pure religion of naturalism; their brief ritual is performed as they come out from the cave where they house:

Belarius. Stoop, boys: this gate
Instructs you how to adore the heavens, and bows you

To Morning's holy office: the gates of monarchs
Are arch'd so high, that giants may jet through
And keep their impious turbans on, without
Good morrow to the Sun. Hail, thou fair Heaven!
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do.
Guiderius. Hail, Heaven!
Arviragus. Hail, Heaven!
Belarius. Now for our mountain sport.

In these rocks Belarius has lived, he says, for twenty years, and during that time has paid more pious debts to heaven than in all the fore-end of his life. A kind of weariness of institutions pervades Shakespeare's later plays; and it is easy to believe that the fascinating tales told by the voyagers quickened his longing for a simpler society, and contributed something to his magical descriptions of innocence and kindliness, whether in the wizard's cell on the island, or on the shepherd's lawn in Bohemia, or in the cave among the mountains of Wales.

There is no catching Shakespeare in the act of theft; his creative power transforms and inspires all that it touches, and brings it obedient to his own thought. It is certain that he was a poet; and there certainty ends. But whether it count for much or little in the history of his thought, the great fact of the Voyages can never be neglected, nor its influence on the national imagination denied. In the partial and naked record preserved for us by Hakluyt are inscribed the deeds which for half a century excited wild emotions, kindled emulation in the young, provided strange food for the intellect, and gave strength and purpose to the activities of a nation. What this scholar or that learned we can only guess; but here was the school of the people. It was a great training-ground, and gave noble

exercise to those qualities of strenuousness, high carelessness, and almost braggart magnanimity which are the distinguishing mark of the Elizabethans. In those days the prudential virtues hid their heads, to wait for a less stormy season, when coasting voyages for profit should come into fashion again. The poets and men of action vied with each other in the effort to outshine deeds with words, and to impoverish words with deeds. Both were fantastic and extravagant, but the morbid literary extravagance, which refuses the test of action, and claims to be judged as a thing apart, in a filigree world of its own creation, belongs to ages less full-blooded and vigorous and sane.

This great background and seminary of action gave its colour and character to the literature of the Elizabethan age. The later and lesser outburst of Romantic poetry at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century had origins curiously different. As the Voyagers were the begetters of the Elizabethan age, so were the Encyclopaedists of the age of revived Romance. The later movement had its impulse and inspiration from the long labours of critical thought and the hopes of awakening science. The poetry of the Nineteenth Century, unlike the poetry of the Elizabethans, began in reaction and protest. For three generations and more before William Blake struck the note that was to dominate Romantic poetry, the disciples of positive knowledge had been busy at their work of questioning, examining, undermining, condemning, without hesitation or remorse; and the poets of the new age were the rebellious children of the destroyer. Some of them, taking advantage of the conquests of critical knowledge in the domain of history, flung themselves back into the Middle Ages, and attempted to live as pensioners on the faith of a bygone time. Others, fired by the hope of a new happiness to be achieved by experimental science and philanthropy, lived in their dreams of the

future, built cloud-castles of wonderful tenuity and beauty, and peopled bubble-worlds with phantoms of men. Almost all the poetry of the age is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' Those of the poets who, like Keats, celebrate the joys of the moment, for the most part regard these joys as a palliation only, a brief respite and escape from the prevailing melancholy. They glut their sorrows 'on a morning rose, or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave.' It is the distinction of Wordsworth that he alone among the greater poets did not renounce or blaspheme the age and the world, but found in it room enough for hope and faith and lasting joy. But the poetry of the age, taken as a whole, is disaffected—out of sympathy with the main motives that stir men to action, and liable to all the diseases generated by abstract thought. The worst of these, which attack only weak constitutions, producing kinks in the brain, and making men the fevered and querulous slaves of ideas they are not strong enough to master, may be discovered in not a few of the later followers and adherents of the Romantic movement. It was the misfortune of the age that, struggling in the meshes of thought, it found no sufficient opportunity for clear, united, whole-hearted, and decisive action. Some of its poets were ardent students of Godwin's *Political Justice*, a book alert and blind, full of vaporous casuistry, giving ample exercise to the logical faculty, and absolutely ignoring those passions, desires and powers, which are the breath of human life. The Elizabethan poets were happier in their teachers—they had Hakluyt's *Voyages*.

When all is said, the chief influence of Hakluyt and his noble company must not be looked for in literature. Literature is only one expression of the imaginative life of a people, and not the most important. It is true that poetry can never be divided from action without paying heavy penalties. Only

by keeping firm hold of that guarantee of sincerity which is supplied by the deed done can it steer clear of the slippery pitfall of rhetoric. But action is not dependent on poetry; and the inarticulate generations who inherited and carried on the work celebrated in the Book of Voyages played for higher stakes than praise. It was almost an accident that the book was made; the dynasty of Drake and Hawkins and Frobisher would have established its reign had it never found a chronicler. In 1736 proposals were issued for a reprint of Hakluyt, but support was lacking, and the scheme fell through. The first reprint, numbering three hundred and twenty-five copies, did not appear till 1811. It is the high reward of great deeds that they can afford to be forgotten. Fame is a luxury, if not a vanity. By secret and unconscious methods of initiation, by that unwritten tradition which descends from father to son, by the law of nature which gives currency to inherent value no matter whose the superscription, the ideas and aims of the great Elizabethan seamen have become the creed of the British Empire. Yet Hakluyt's book, though it has little to do with the history of letters, gives, to those who care to read, a rare opportunity of insight into the hidden processes of the making of a nation. When it was first published all that had been imagined and attempted, at the cost of so many years of effort and so many men's lives, was yet to do. No thoroughfare had been discovered by the North-East or the North-West. No English Community had been established oversea. No gold-mine was in the possession of England. The Spanish power was stronger on the seas than it had been before the Armada. So far the record is one of failure. But on the other side of the account there is an item which cannot be neglected. It is to be found in those long and dull lists of unknown names, of merchant promoters, gentlemen adventurers, intending colonists, and ships'

companies, which give so businesslike an air to Hakluyt's pages. It may be true, as someone has said, that these detailed summaries 'leave as little impression of excitement or emulation upon our minds as so many almanacks.' But they held in them the promise of Empire. The ideas of colonial expansion and of the command of the sea had captured the nation; the seeds had been scattered, and were germinating in tens of thousands of minds. From the sea England had been peopled by successive waves of conquest or immigration; to the sea, after a long interval, she gave back a race who had learned that there and there alone could her safety be made good and her name upheld. As a people—to borrow a phrase from the poetry of common speech—we follow the sea; it will be an ill day for us when the tides that wash the world run their ancient courses, and we may not follow.

Sir Walter Raleigh

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